

WIN HENRY TAYLOR & HAMLET BOWL GOUGES

Woodturning

THE WORLD'S LEADING MAGAZINE FOR WOODTURNERS

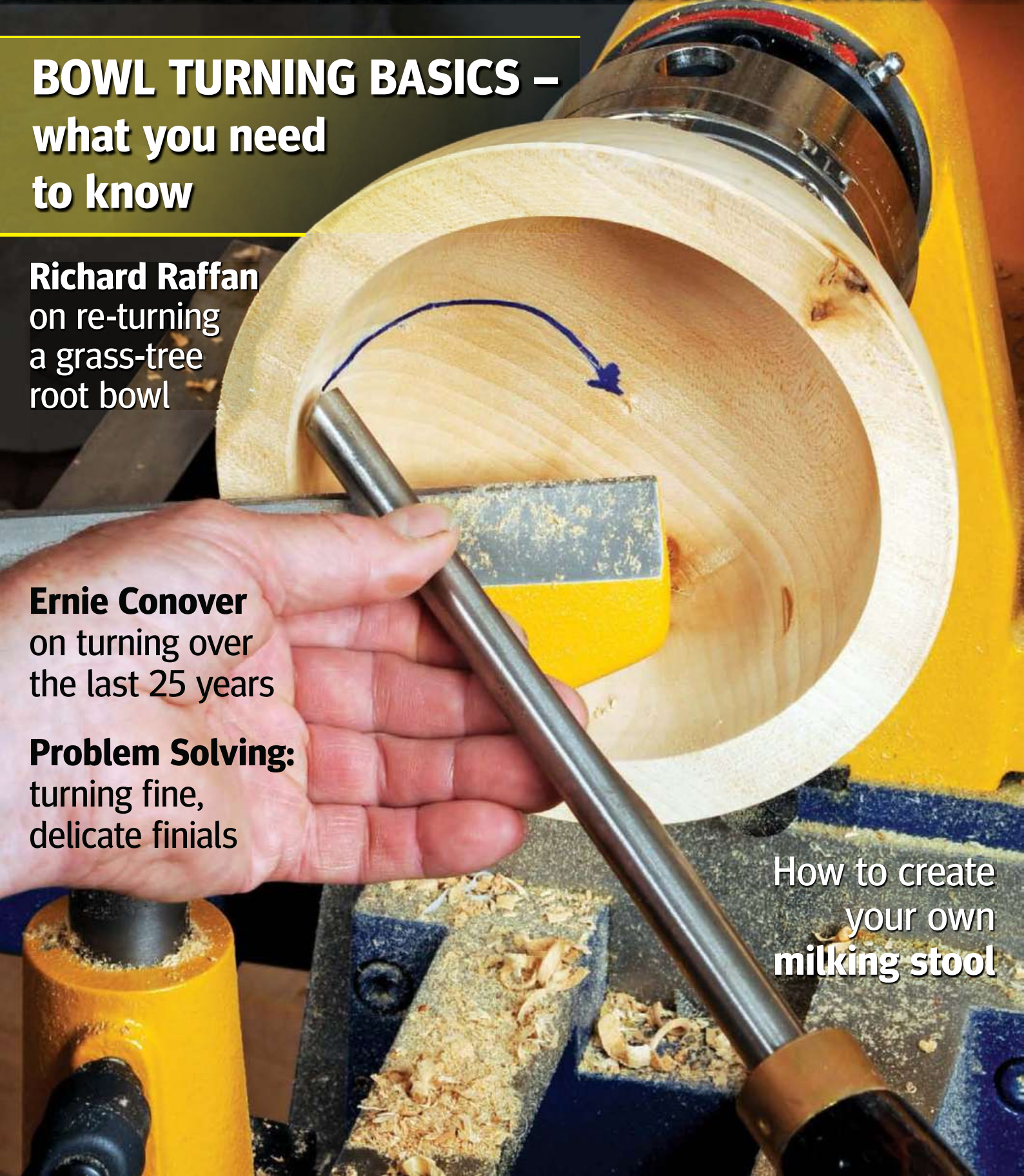
BOWL TURNING BASICS – what you need to know

Richard Raffan
on re-turning
a grass-tree
root bowl

Ernie Conover
on turning over
the last 25 years

Problem Solving:
turning fine,
delicate finials

How to create
your own
milking stool



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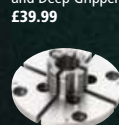
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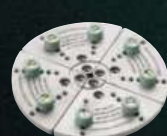
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Celebrating diversity in turning

PHOTOGRAPH BY GMC/ANTHONY BAILEY

My patience with turning has grown over the years and I am also now very much aware of my limitations



I hope you enjoyed issue 1 of *Woodturning* magazine, which came free with the last issue. I remember reading issue 1 when the magazine launched and was blown

away by the contents and what people were making. I did not know so many people were doing such wonderful things.

As an enthusiastic turner of some years – note I make no comment on my proficiency at that stage – but one who wasn't exposed to much of what was happening in the wider world of turning at that time, I wanted to know everything NOW! I know I made a lot of mistakes but I continued to learn as fast as I could. That said, it was never fast enough to satisfy my curiosity and 'needs'. So, as with all things, I had to learn about my limitations and of course, the all-important lesson of learning patience. It is OK to develop gradually – in truth, we don't really have a choice in that matter and for that I am glad. Knowing that we do not have a choice should make us go easy on ourselves

about our perceived slowness or lack of development. But, this learning curve is what makes us who we are. The lessons learned, the people we meet along the way and the things we see shape us and mould us. I am so impatient with myself that this was an important lesson for me. If we could have an instant upload to make us able to learn anything in the time it took for a programme to download and install, would it be the same? Since we do not have such things I do not know for sure, but suspect that it would not. We would, in effect, have the knowledge without the personal history or journey of getting there. The personal experience is one of the things that people say causes our work to be definably ours. If we do not have that learning curve and experience, is our work less or, even worse, so homogenised that it is indistinguishable from anyone else's?

The individuality and different experiences of us all is what makes people we link up with in so many ways the enjoyable experience it is. We constantly learn and change and without this, it would be a very sad state of affairs and we would all be the less for it.

Celebrate diversity and our collective differences and don't be vexed by them. Everyone involved in woodturning is on a slightly different journey but we remain connected in our love of woodturning. Yes, views of what woodturning is, can be and how it will develop, will no doubt continue for as long as woodturning continues, but again, don't worry, as everything will develop in time and be what it will be. We cannot control that any more than we can turn back the tide. We can learn patience and enjoy our own journeys and by sharing that journey and our experiences, help and encourage others to explore, thereby passing on a love of woodturning.

It will be interesting to see how it develops over the next 25 years and I am glad to play my part in seeing that it continues to be as exciting for others as it has been for me.

Have fun,
Mark

markb@thegmcgroup.com



Woodworkers Institute website (www.woodworkersinstitute.com) is thriving. It would be great if you took a look and participated in the various discussions and competitions in our community, or see us on Facebook & Twitter.

Contents

Issue 285 Nov 2015

COVER IMAGE BY GMC/
ANTHONY BAILEY.
See page 46 for
Bowl Turning Basics



Projects

- 21 **25th anniversary pen**
To celebrate *Woodturning* magazine's 25th anniversary, Walter Hall shows you how to make a special sterling silver plated fountain pen

- 41 **Owl-shaped salt and pepper mills**
John Hawkswell turns a segmented salt and pepper mill set

- 65 **Sweet chestnut bowl**
Bob Chapman looks at sweet chestnut and turns an Art Deco-style bowl



Features

- 52 **Woodturning magazine 25 years later**

Ernie Conover looks back at developments in woodturning equipment over the last 25 years

- 71 **Colwin Way in profile**
We meet Colwin Way, a woodturner based in the small seaside town Lyme Regis

- 77 **2015 AWGB International Woodturning Seminar report**
Mark Baker reports from the recent biennial AWGB International Woodturning Seminar

- 104 **Featured Artist**
Ron Gerton shares this wonderful piece, made in boxelder and bronze, which wonderfully marries the shape of sagebrush plants and the Art Nouveau era

Technical

- 15 **A happy re-turn**
Richard Raffan receives an old bowl of his, which he is more than happy to re-turn

- 27 **Turning fine, delicate finials**
This month Richard Findley looks at the problems turners face when making tall, elegant and potentially delicate finials

- 35 **The Parker Windsor Castle chess set**
In the second in his series on turning chess sets, Mike Darlow discusses the history, design and making of a 19th-century St George style chess set with a royal association

- 46 **Bowl basics – common problems**
Andy Coates addresses and demystifies some of the common problems experienced by beginners when turning basic bowls

- 59 **Fast and easy finishes**
Kurt Hertzog explores a few of the fast and easy finishes that he uses on his turnings

- 85 **Tips for turning a milking stool**
Philip Greenwood takes you through the stages for turning a three-legged milking stool in beech



NEWS, LATEST PRODUCTS, MAGAZINE UPLOADS & EVENTS

can all be found on www.woodworkersinstitute.com. These all appear on the magazine homepage and you can see a bigger selection by scrolling down the page and clicking on the individual stories. We also have an extensive online archive for you to browse

Subscribers!

Turn to page 91 for subscription special offers and you could save 30%!

Community

- 3 **Leader**
Mark Baker introduces you to this month's issue with a celebration of diversity in turning
- 7 **Round & about**
We bring you the latest news from the world of woodturning as well as letters from the Woodworkers Institute forum and important dates for your diary from the woodturning community
- 12 **Giveaway**
To celebrate 25 years of *Woodturning* magazine, during the year-long celebration, the leading names in the industry will be giving away items from their product ranges. This month, we have £602 worth of Henry Taylor Tools and Hamlet Craft Tools bowl gouges to be won
- 83 **Next issue**
Find out what's in store for next month



35



Kit & Tools

- 94 **Kit & tools**
A mixture of press releases showing the latest tools and products on the market



21



HEALTH AND SAFETY

Woodturning is an inherently dangerous pursuit. Readers should not attempt the procedures described herein without seeking training and information on the safe use of tools and machines. All readers should observe current safety legislation.

Conversion chart	
2mm	(⁵ / ₆₄ in)
3mm	(¹ / ₈ in)
4mm	(¹ / ₄ in)
6mm	(¹ / ₂ in)
7mm	(⁹ / ₃₂ in)
8mm	(⁵ / ₁₆ in)
9mm	(¹¹ / ₃₂ in)
10mm	(³ / ₈ in)
11mm	(⁷ / ₁₆ in)
12mm	(¹ / ₂ in)
13mm	(¹ / ₂ in)
14mm	(⁹ / ₁₆ in)
15mm	(⁹ / ₁₆ in)
16mm	(⁵ / ₈ in)
17mm	(¹¹ / ₁₆ in)
18mm	(²³ / ₃₂ in)
19mm	(³ / ₄ in)
20mm	(³ / ₄ in)
21mm	(¹³ / ₁₆ in)
22mm	(¹¹ / ₈ in)
23mm	(²³ / ₃₂ in)
24mm	(¹⁵ / ₁₆ in)
25mm	(1in)
30mm	(1 ¹ / ₈ in)
32mm	(1 ¹ / ₄ in)
35mm	(1 ³ / ₈ in)
38mm	(1 ¹ / ₂ in)
40mm	(1 ⁵ / ₈ in)
45mm	(1 ³ / ₄ in)
50mm	(2in)
55mm	(2 ¹ / ₈ -2 ¹ / ₄ in)
60mm	(2 ³ / ₈ in)
63mm	(2 ¹ / ₂ in)
65mm	(2 ⁵ / ₈ in)
70mm	(2 ⁷ / ₈ in)
75mm	(3in)
80mm	(3 ¹ / ₈ in)
85mm	(3 ³ / ₈ in)
90mm	(3 ¹ / ₂ in)
93mm	(3 ⁵ / ₈ in)
95mm	(3 ³ / ₄ in)
100mm	(4in)
105mm	(4 ¹ / ₈ in)
110mm	(4 ¹ / ₄ -4 ³ / ₈ in)
115mm	(4 ¹ / ₂ in)
120mm	(4 ³ / ₄ in)
125mm	(5in)
130mm	(5 ¹ / ₈ in)
135mm	(5 ¹ / ₄ in)
140mm	(5 ¹ / ₂ in)
145mm	(5 ³ / ₄ in)
150mm	(6in)
155mm	(6 ¹ / ₈ in)
160mm	(6 ¹ / ₄ in)
165mm	(6 ¹ / ₂ in)
170mm	(6 ³ / ₄ in)
178mm	(6 ⁷ / ₈ in)
180mm	(7in)
185mm	(7 ¹ / ₄ in)
190mm	(7 ¹ / ₂ in)
195mm	(7 ³ / ₄ in)
200mm	(8in)
305mm	(12in)
405mm	(16in)
510mm	(20in)
610mm	(24in)
710mm	(28in)
815mm	(32in)
915mm	(36in)
1015mm	(40in)
1120mm	(44in)
1220mm	(48in)
1320mm	(52in)
1420mm	(56in)
1525mm	(60in)

Saturday & Sunday November 7th & 8th



Open House

**at The ToolPost 10h00 - 16h00 daily
featuring UK woodturners**

Gerry Marlow & Jason Breach

plus carver Simon Clements, Bert Butterfield on pyrography and the chance to chat with many of our suppliers. Enjoy the informal setting of our Didcot shop and the opportunity to get 'up close and personal' with these highly skilled and fascinating demonstrators.



Box by Jason Breach

Free Entry * Free Parking * Deals of the Day * Free Refreshments * Free Demonstrations



Classics by Carter & Son Toolworks

M42 High Speed Steel (HSS) is one of the most sophisticated materials used in tool production - and is so exotic that it is rarely used for woodturning tools.

But if you are as passionate about producing simply "the best" woodturning tools - as is the case with Carter & Son Toolworks - then this is the ultimate material choice.

Why? Because M42 creates supersharp - razor-sharp - edges that are also very, very durable. The M42 blades are mounted in beautiful - yes, simply beautiful - handles of aircraft grade turned aluminium to create woodturning tools like no others.

Aluminium not only gives a strong handle but dampens vibration, reducing tool chatter, yet remains a balanced delight to use, enhanced by the knurled grip. And because, with every justification, Carter Toolworks are proud of what they produce, every handle carries their engraved signature.

But the folk over at Carter & Son Toolworks don't rest on their laurels: they're out working to create a better world for woodturners with an ever-widening range of tools. And they're working to enhance and improve the tools

that they already have in the line-up which is a refreshingly enlightened view. Beats the 'we walk on water' mentality any day, in my book.

So now you can take your pick from bowl gouges in 5/8" and 1/2" diameters, spindle gouges in 1/2" and 3/8" sizes and a 3/4" roughing gouge. Thanks to those new additions to the range you can now also choose a radiused edge skew chisel in either 1/2" or 1" widths, parting tools of 1/8" or 3/16", and a choice of 1" wide heavy duty scrapers in either bowl or square ended format.

Whichever you choose, you can be assured of getting a product that has been designed and developed using highly original thinking to create tools that make your woodturning more effective and more enjoyable.

Complete tools, with handle, are priced* from £114; blades from £66; handles from £60. Tools you will be proud to use. And you can be sure that there will be more to follow before the shavings pile gets a whole lot bigger.

If you are ready for the best that the tool industry can supply, then you're ready for Carter Tools. Drop in and take a test drive or call us on 01235 511101.

The ToolPost

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sharing expertise

*inc VAT. Price correct at time of going to press

Round & about

We bring you the latest news from the world of woodturning as well as letters from the Woodworkers Institute forum and important dates for your diary from the woodturning community

Virtual woodturning group is 'eggs-actly' what women turners ordered!

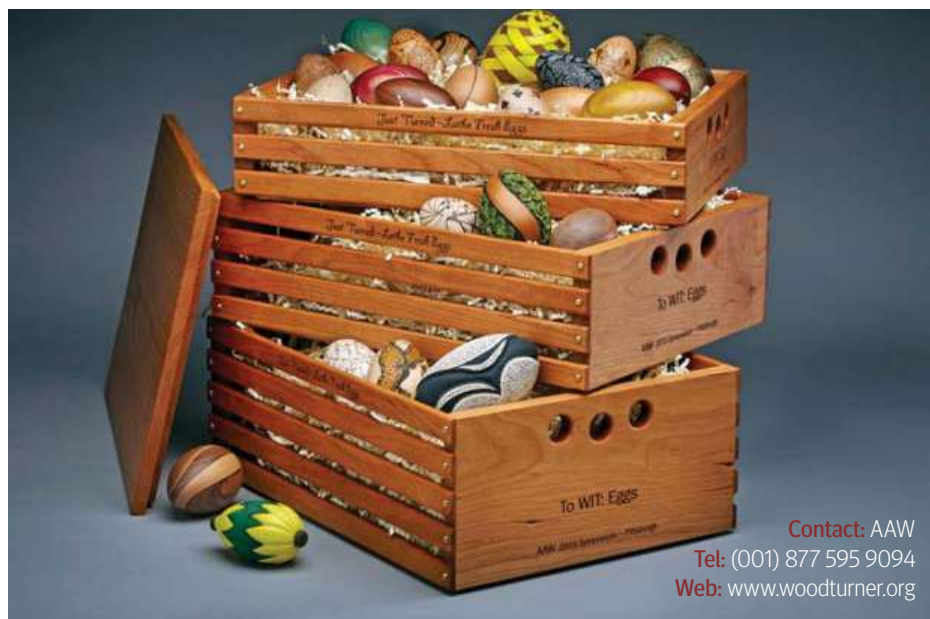
Just about a year ago, Women in Turning (WIT) became the newest virtual chapter of the American Association of Woodturners (AAW) connecting women worldwide who share a passion for woodturning. The group is dedicated to encouraging and assisting women in their pursuit of turning, to share ideas and processes to further members' skills and creativity, and to increase the participation of women in the field of woodturning.

WIT began when a group of women met informally at AAW's 2014 Annual International Symposium in Phoenix, Arizona, to discuss the possibility of forming a group for women turners. Enthusiasm was rampant and WIT became a reality. Like other AAW chapters, WIT relies on the generosity and volunteerism of its members to advance its success.

Betty Scarpino, former editor of the *American Woodturner* journal, heads the group. She envisioned the idea for WIT's first group project, 'a gathering of eggs' for the AAW's 2015 Annual International Symposium in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Dixie Biggs designed an egg crate to house the many eggs that would be created and Janet Collins constructed the crate, which is expandable to accommodate various number and size eggs.

First eggs

The first eggs – pictured here – were crafted by turners Dixie Biggs, Betty Scarpino, Sharon Doughtie, Janet Collins, Donna Zils Banfield, Linda Ferber, Sandy Davis, Cynthia Gibson, Camille Wall, Sally Ault, Sherry Hockenbery, Janice Levi and Margaret Lospinuso. Additional women contributed even more turned eggs at AAW's 2015 symposium, including Ana Lappegard, Barbara Dill, Carrie Adams, Cindy Boehrns, Daryl March Gray, Dawn Herndon-Charles, Dawn Petrie, Donna Lauzon, Flo Sayre, Helga Winter, Jeannie Doliphrate, Joan Lech, Joanne Wilson, Jolie Karno, Kathy McCall, Lauren Zenreich, Leslie Struthers, Lynda



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF AAW, UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

The crate of 'just turned lathe fresh eggs'



Dixie Biggs' turned egg



Camille Wall's turned egg

Zibbideo, Mary Lou Beauchamp, Molly Goodfellow Winton, Nancy Rourke, Susan R. McCoy, Suzanne Bonsall Kahn, Tania Radda, Mary C. Meinken, Kathleen Duncan, Cindy Cwi, Jennifer Shirley, Jolie Karno, Carmen De La Paz, and Cheryl Samuel. All of the woodturned eggs are one-of-a-kind, signed originals.

A good cause

What's more, the WIT crate of more than 50 'eggs-traordinary' eggs was sold at the AAW's Educational Opportunity Grant (EOG) benefit auction on 27 June, to help fund educational opportunities such as

turning-related courses, youth programmes and public outreach. Suspense in the auction room increased with every bid and every hesitation, until the final gavel confirmed an 'egg-ceptional' sale price of \$9,000 (£5,790).

WIT is truly a gathering of 'good eggs' and welcomes women woodturners everywhere. If you would like to connect with women globally who share a passion for woodturning and if you would like to share ideas and encourage other women in their woodturning pursuits, you are invited to join. To learn more, visit the WIT Facebook page at www.facebook.com/pages/Women-in-Turning/732036653523097.

The Annual Contemporary Crafts & Design Fair

Handmade in Britain '15, the annual showcase of the very best of contemporary British craft and design, takes place at Chelsea Old Town Hall this November. Browse exceptional crafts, buy unique and original gifts or commission a bespoke piece of work directly from over 120 of the UK's finest designer-makers, each handpicked by a panel of industry experts.

The show is a wonderful opportunity to

shop for exquisite ceramics, glass, furniture, textiles, jewellery and silverware in a beautiful, historic venue. Makers will be on hand throughout the weekend to talk to you about their work and showcase their collections, inviting you to learn how your favourite pieces are made and to discover the story behind that perfect gift.

Not to be missed at the fair this year is the New Graduate Showcase, supported by Arts Thread. Alongside established and

well-known makers, the show celebrates new talent and invites you to meet designers at the very start of their career.

When: 13–15 November, 2015

Where: Chelsea Old Town Hall, Kings Road, London SW3 5EE

Contact: Handmade In Britain

Tickets: From £8

Tel: 020 7286 5110

Web: www.handmadeinbritain.co.uk



Ebony (*Diospyros spp.*) bowl with gold inner, by Moth and Mirror



Lacewood (*Roupala brasiliensis*) bowl with champagne gold inner, by Moth and Mirror

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF HANDMADE IN BRITAIN

Axminster Tools & Machinery to open new store in Cardiff

Axminster Tools & Machinery is expanding the retail side of its business once more. With a presence already in the Home Counties, Midlands, South West, North West and North East, the tool retailer is now planning to open a store in the Cardiff area. The new outlet, which is scheduled to open this November, is situated at Valegate Retail Park to the west of Cardiff city centre and will be the eighth store for the company.

With 12,000 sq.ft. of retail space, the Cardiff store will be open seven days a week,

including bank holidays, in line with most other retail outlets in the area. Although the new store will appeal to a wide range of customers, it will also display an impressive range of industrial machinery, including models from Axminster's own Industrial Series. The store will also offer a delivery service in the local area.

One aspect that will differ from all the other Axminster stores is that some signage will be in both English and Welsh. Although a new store, it will still maintain



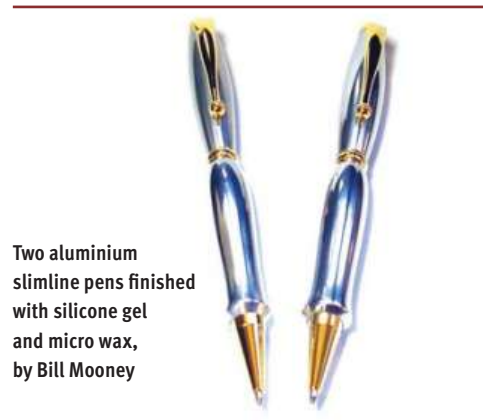
Axminster's North Shields store, which opened in March, 2015

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF AXMINSTER TOOLS & MACHINERY

the Axminster ethos of offering high quality advice and customer service. For more information, see below.

Contact: Axminster Tools & Machinery

Tel: 03332 406 406 **Web:** www.axminster.co.uk



Two aluminium slimline pens finished with silicone gel and micro wax, by Bill Mooney



'Catching Fire' in orange (*Maclura pomifera*) wood, 260mm tall x 95mm wide, by Andrea Zanini



Victorian grain measures in sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), by nicksimpson

Fantastic service

Hi Mark,

As an expat living in Spain 'on the campo', we only have solar electricity, bottled gas and irrigation water seven months of the year so woodturning has had to take a back seat for a while, especially in the winter. However, this year I decided to upgrade my lathe from a Record Power DML24X to a CL3-Cam model. It came about when I received a warning from Record Power saying that my AC400 air cleaner may have had a possible electrical fault. They were very helpful and sent out the replacement part and idiot-proof installation instructions followed by an email checking that it was all OK. I replied that it was and asked if he could possibly send me a copy of the machine test for the CL3-Cam lathe that *Woodturning* had carried out some years ago. He did and I decided to buy one on my annual pilgrimage back to the UK a few weeks later.

Before leaving, I sent emails to several stores for comparison prices but it soon became apparent that no one had one in stock and, worse still, that Record Power couldn't supply any more until possibly next year. Panic set in. As a last resort, I sent an email directly to Record Power asking if they knew of any stockist that might have one. Within the hour, they came back to me with the name of a store that had possibly the only one left in the country – D&M Tools in

Twickenham. I phoned them immediately, ordered it and asked if they would keep it for me until I arrived in the UK to collect it some two weeks later. No problem – they removed it from their online catalogue immediately and they didn't even want a deposit! Brilliant, it was just a shame that when I did pick it up parking was difficult and so I didn't get a chance to look around properly and spend more money in their shop!

Two weeks later and a return trip via France of 1,000 miles, the old bench has been 'beefed' up, the old lathe put in storage for my son-in-law next year and the new one installed. I've yet to run in the bronze bearing and use it in anger as it's now raining but I would like to mention that the quality of the castings are not as good as my 20-year-old DML24X model.

You may think this nitpicking but as a young carpenter in the mid-1960s I, along with most other tradesmen I knew, bought planes and G cramps, etc. from Record believing it to be a name which meant Sheffield/made in England quality. Unfortunately, now everything seems to be made in China where quality control are just words and are not necessarily carried out. But enough moaning, I'm happy so let's all keep producing more wood shavings!

Morgan Griffiths

Wizardry in Wood

Wizardry in Wood will return to Carpenters' Hall in London from 12–15 October next year. The fourth quadrennial exhibition will be organised by the Worshipful Company of Turners of London and will feature a number of wonderful displays of work.

'Kew in the City' is a curated collection of wooden objects and rare timbers from the Economic Botany Collection of The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and 'The Daniel Collection' will be showing a stunning collection of pieces from one of the UK's finest collections of turned works.

Expect to see stands from the AWGB, The Society of Ornamental Turners, the RPT and The Association of Pole Lathe Turners. In addition, you can enjoy a wonderful display of turned pieces from over 25 of the UK's top turners, who will be showing their wares. To find out more about the turning competitions leading up to this event and for further details, see www.turnersco.com.

When: 12–15 October, 2015

Where: Carpenters' Hall, 1 Throgmorton Ave, London EC2N 2JJ

Contact: The Worshipful Company of Turners
Tel: 020 7236 3605

Web: www.turnersco.com

Something for the new generation of woodturners

A five-part short series on woodturning for young audiences called 'Makers' will be broadcast on Irish national TV on October, 2015. Filmed by RTE at Glenn Lucas Woodturning Study Centre in Co Carlow this summer, the series will look at what goes into making a bowl, a spinning top and other items we use around the home. Viewers are also encouraged to plant a tree in their garden. Filmed over a week in July in beautiful rural south east Ireland, the programme will also show what it takes to turn what you like to do into a profession, as the camera follows Glenn as he works in his studio.

For more information, see details below.

Contact: Glenn Lucas

Tel: +353 59 972 7070 **Web:** www.glennlucas.com

Surrey Association of Woodturners' annual show

This annual event returns this year on Sunday 25 October and features a wide range of woodturning demonstrations, crafting tables, a raffle, refreshments, a wood sale and an inter-club competition. Guest demonstrators are Les Thorne and Sue Harker and there will also be a good selection of trade stands from all the leading names. Open to members of the public, woodturners and all those interested in wood.

When: 25 October, 2015

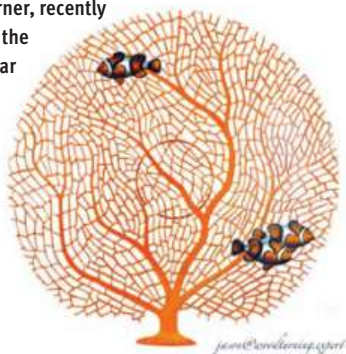
Where: Mytchett Centre, 140 Mytchett Road, Mytchett, Surrey GU16 6AA

Contact: Surrey Association of Woodturners

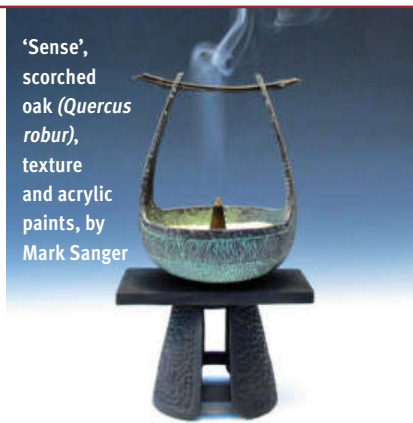
Email: chairman@sawoodturners.org

Web: www.sawoodturners.org

'Eugorgia Aurantia', by Jason The Turner, recently on display at the AWGB Seminar



'Sense', scorched oak (*Quercus robur*), texture and acrylic paints, by Mark Sanger



Bowl in spalted burr sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), 250 x 75mm high, by Neil Lawton

Winged bowls

Hi Mark,

Turning winged bowls is a way of getting something out of almost nothing. A little piece of branchwood measuring 75 × 100mm diameter × 125 × 150mm long, which would normally go straight into the woodburner, can produce two reasonably attractive items.

Even a 150mm scrap of spruce (*Picea spp.*) constructional framing weighing 8oz produced a little quaich, which weighed just over 1oz when finished, leaving seven eighths of the original wood to go into the woodburner.

A quaich is a Scottish drinking vessel, normally used for whisky. If you want to test it out after you have turned it, please do not

do any more turning until the next day!

The Celtic knot pattern is cut by a single point rotary tool following a drawing freehand, using a pantograph with about a 4:1 reduction. The cut pattern is then pencilled or inked in and finished with cellulose sanding sealer and food-safe wax.

A larger bit of laburnum (*Laburnum anagyroides*) branch, in this case 125mm diameter × 23mm long, was used to make a wedding gift, with the addition of the bride and groom's names also engraved.

In addition to producing a reasonably sized article from a small bit of wood, this type of turning is quite fun to do. The secret is to turn at a fairly fast speed, take light cuts and

keep everything except the tip of the tool behind the toolrest. This can be a bit scary at first, especially with a bigish bit of wood of 305mm and over when it sounds like an aeroplane propellor.

For sanding, high speed power sanding is a must. I run the lathe at between 500 and 1,000rpm and the 50mm sanding disc at 13,000rpm using a very light touch, starting with 80 or 120 grit and working through to 400.

All manner of variations can be achieved, wings up, wings down – some up, some down, winged lidded boxes, or even winged double boxes.

Jim Pearson



Jim's quaich in spruce (*Picea spp.*)



This wedding bowl was turned from a laburnum (*Laburnum anagyroides*) branch

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JIM PEARSON

Passing judgement on turned pieces

Mark,

Does it really matter how a person categorises themselves when that categorising is linked to a piece of woodturning? Surely the judgement is made of the piece of work, not the skill or otherwise of the woodturner or the process of achieving the particular outcome? I have seen exquisite pieces made by 'beginners' and poor pieces made by 'experts'. I have seen lovely pieces, which were obviously simply made and not requiring high levels of 'woodturning skill' and poor pieces which have involved a lot of 'woodturning skill'. Yes, it is all a matter of

opinion but if one is able to perceive a level of 'joy in the making', a passion for the material and a sensitivity in its use, does anything else really matter? One should judge the qualities of the product in isolation from knowledge of the maker, then the judgement made of the work could be used to categorise the maker but only if that is deemed important.

If asked to pass judgement on a piece, I can look for tooling marks, uneven surfaces, functionality and quality of finish quite readily and can be reasonably objective about those. When it comes to quality of line and form, life becomes much more difficult and

highly subjective. I get the feeling that many woodturners associate complex shapes, which were difficult to form, with the quality of the outcome. I don't get that at all. Complex shapes, well executed according to my listing of objective criteria, can be judged from superb in all respects through to overly ornate but well made rubbish. I am happy to share an opinion about their form. Each to their own, that is the point. For most of us, woodturning is a leisure activity; very few of us have to turn for a living. So the enjoyment factor within the realms of safe practice is paramount.

John Plater

Woodturning – the best it's ever been!

Hi Mark,

A very quick note just to say that I have recently started getting *Woodturning* magazine again and it is an absolute credit to your hard work. It is the best it has ever been. Well done and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Les Thorne

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25th anniversary giveaway

– Henry Taylor Tools & Hamlet Craft Tools

To celebrate 25 years of *Woodturning* magazine, during the year-long celebration, the leading names in the industry are giving away items from their product ranges. This month, we have £602 worth of **Henry Taylor Tools** and **Hamlet Craft Tools** bowl gouges to be won

**WORTH
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PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF HAMLET TOOLS LTD

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information and to see other products in the Henry Taylor Tools and Hamlet Craft Tools visit www.henrytaylortools.co.uk and www.hamletcrafttools.co.uk

How to enter

Send your details on a postcard with the title '25th anniversary giveaway 285' to **Woodturning Reader Giveaway**, 86 High Street, Lewes, East

Sussex BN7 1XN or send an email to karencs@thegmcgroup.com. The closing date for the giveaway is 23 December, 2015

Giveaway rules

The giveaway is open to UK residents only. Only completed entries received by the closing date will be eligible. No entries received after that date will be considered. No cash alternatives will be offered. The judges'

decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. The winner will be expected to be in possession of a copy of this issue of *Woodturning* magazine. One entry per household. Employees of GMC Publications, their associated companies and families are not eligible to enter. By entering the giveaway, winners agree to their names being used in future marketing by GMC Publications, unless you mark your entry otherwise

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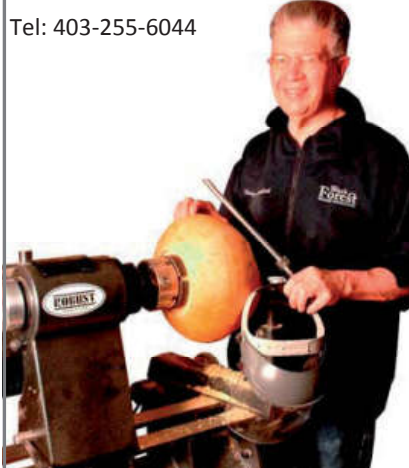
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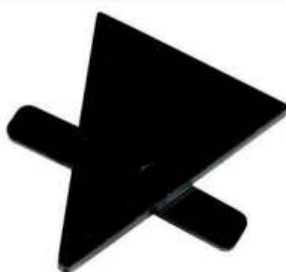
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A happy re-turn

Richard Raffan receives an old bowl he made, which he was more than happy to re-turn

RICHARD RAFFAN



Richard Raffan is a highly respected and well known woodturner and is best known for his turned bowls and boxes. He is a teacher, demonstrator and author of a number of classic woodturning books and DVDs.

www.richardraffan.com

As a professional woodturner for 45 years I've sold around 28,000 bowls. Occasionally, I come across one and I am relieved that what I see isn't an embarrassment. But, of course it was inevitable that a few bowls that were less than satisfactory to me left my workshop as I struggled to get bread on the table.

Eventually, everything finds a buyer. So there are pieces out there, somewhere, I wish that I'd never signed. Very occasionally these come back to me and this is the story of one of them – the 330 × 110mm grass tree root (*Xanthorrhoea australis*) bowl – see step 1 and step 2.

I've always enjoyed turning bowls that could be used day-to-day; salad and cereal bowls not so thin that they'd float to the floor if dropped, or thick and heavy enough to break a toe. My 300mm salad bowls have walls around 10-15mm thick; 150mm diameter bowls are 7-9mm thick. These were what I made for nearly 15 years, first in Devon, where I sold mostly to a domestic market and then Australia where most of my work sold to tourists looking for souvenirs.

In the early '80s, I was exploring a wide range of bowl forms, partly to include in *Turned Bowl Design*. I was also wondering what to do with some overly fissured jarrah



1 Interior of the rim section of the original bowl



2 330 × 110mm grass tree root (*Xanthorrhoea*) bowl

(*Eucalyptus marginata*) burl that was useless for thin bowls, but had cost far too much to burn. From this I turned chunky bowls with walls as much as 70mm thick.

They were excellent as fruit bowls but tended to be regarded as Art – with a capital ‘A’. To my surprise they sold really well, as did similar heavy bowls defect-free. By the mid-’80s this style of bowl had become a bonanza for a wide range of turning abilities in and around Sydney. Chunky – and often clunky – bowls flooded the market and turners, who couldn’t turn a thin bowl to save their lives, made a good living with the new art form. It’s my belief that tourists felt they got good value with a lot of wood for their money, added to which these bowls were safe in checked luggage no matter how cavalier the airline baggage handlers.

In the mid-’80s woodturners were also under pressure to be more creative. Bowls

with holes, splits and other features formerly thought to be defects that rendered a bowl unsaleable, were suddenly in demand. Beads and feathers were needlessly attached to poor forms to make them artistic. Thus for base commercial reasons, I went through a period of smothering heavy forms with beads and coves and texturing, all the while joking that one day I might get to reshape some of these thick-walled bowls. And indeed I have.

The re-turn

This grass tree root bowl is not something I’d like to be remembered for, although the woman who purchased it and eventually returned it to me when downsizing hoped to see it placed in a museum. I was so shocked I

neglected to get her name and address and now I’m unable to apologise for what I’ve done.

I’ve rarely let anything out of my workshop unless I’m reasonably satisfied with it, especially as almost every piece has my name on it and less-than-satisfactory pieces have a nasty habit of ending up somewhere where they might damage my reputation for turning decent forms.

This bowl must have passed inspection at the time, but now I find that while I don’t mind the inside and rim, I find the profile ponderous and visually top heavy. I also don’t care for the brushed grooves or the band of natural-edge around the rim of the bowl.

Re-mounting the bowl on the lathe

When it came to reshaping this bowl, there was plenty of wood to play with – the thinnest wall section was around 30mm thick. I’d made it using a Raffan chuck in the mid-’80s, using the expanding collet in the recess – see step 3. Grass root is not a strong wood, here rendered even less so for having the grain parallel to the lathe axis. If I reduced the diameter of the base, I couldn’t trust the wood to hold in the event of a catch, so simply remounting the bowl on expanding jaws was risky. That was a pity, because the bowl had not distorted one iota in 30 years. However, this was a

good opportunity to show a couple of ways of attacking this project.

I like to work the outside of a bowl without the tailcentre in the way. Here the simplest solution, given that I have a suitable chuck, was to expand the jaws into the internal grooves – see step 10. However, most bowls are smooth inside, devoid of fixing points, so you need to turn a shoulder inside to locate the jaws.

If there is no foot to grip, or the bowl is very distorted, a good option is to true it between centres in preparation for remounting in a chuck, so you can turn

the internal shoulder. This can be achieved by jamming the bowl against a faceplate and this can seat either inside the bowl or against the bowl’s rim. The tailcentre should keep the bowl in position and steady enough for you to true the foot. I’m using a bowl profile as a drive – rather than a faceplate – with a pad between the centre and the base so the cone can’t penetrate the wood – see step 4. The downside of this is that, without the cone in the wood, the bowl can slip between centres. Here, I’d rather that than risk the centre cone leave a mark or even go through the base.



3 Using the expanding collet in the recess of my Raffan chuck



4 Using a pad between the centre and base so the cone can't penetrate the wood

Truing up and elimination

Once the bowl was on the lathe, I used a 13mm spindle gouge to skim away everything I didn’t want and true up the foot and base – see step 5. This revealed the sizeable void in the growth rings, of which there was no evidence on the rim. When turning away such a defect, I mark the arc within which it lies so I know where to look to see if it’s gone. In step 6 you can see there was still a long slit, leaving me three options: first, I could lose it by reducing the diameter of the bowl, something I’m loath to do as a smaller diameter means I have to charge less for the bowl; second, I could brush out the split, possibly scorching it with a gas torch first and

live with it as a decorative feature under the rim – but that’s not really my thing.

I opted to fill the split with a mix of five-minute epoxy and African blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*) dust, so I maintained the maximum possible turned diameter with no holes – see step 7. I used to use cyanoacrylate glues but know now that these crack-up after a few years, whereas epoxy doesn’t. If you don’t have any very dark wood, kid’s powder paint or coffee grounds are a good substitute. The problem with having the bowl between centres is that you can’t get at the whole of the base and the tailstock tends to get in the way of many of the techniques you might

use to complete the outside of a bowl. With the outside trued – see step 8 – the bowl was ready to be remounted – see step 9 – so I could turn a shoulder on the inside. All you need is a small shoulder for your chuck jaws to expand against. If you have only standard jaws, you can use the end of the jaw sliders as they project beyond the body of the chuck. I was lucky to have a bowl that hadn’t warped; some grooves I would get rid of and some Vicmarc multi-purpose jaws wide enough to fit into the grooves – see step 10. Smaller diameter jaws would have required a small step further into the bowl, of about 3mm. Before I’d have used a three-jaw engineering chuck or made a jam chuck.



5 Using a 13mm spindle gouge to skim everything away to reshape the profile



6 A split was evident after skimming



7 Filling the split with five-minute epoxy mixed with blackwood dust



8 The outside of the bowl is now trued



9 Ready to turn a shoulder on the inside of the bowl



10 Expanding the jaws into the internal grooves

Completion

With the bowl securely remounted and the outside fully accessible, I refined the form, bearing in mind I still needed a shoulder or foot for a chuck to grab, so the bowl could be hollowed. Initially, I was thinking of an outflowing foot – see step 11 – with a shoulder turned to fit 80mm diameter shark jaws. The whole of the outside was initially turned using a 12mm spindle gouge, including the base and rim detail – see steps 12 and 13. Using the edge as a shear scraper produced a better surface than a shear cut, so I went over the profile again using a shear scraper.

I never sand anything until I have to, just in case things don't go as planned, so with the outside turned, the bowl was remounted for hollowing – see step 14. I used a 13mm deep fluted bowl gouge to eliminate the internal grooves and realign the internal curve, then

prefer a heavy bowl scraper with a radius only slightly tighter than the curve I was cutting. No more than 10mm of the edge contacted the wood at one time.

Given the nature of the material, this was never going to be an ultra-thin bowl: I ended up with a wall thickness of 23mm just below the rim, slimming to 15mm two-thirds of the way down and 15mm in the base over the recess.

After sanding and polishing the inside and the profile down to the chuck jaws, I re-chucked the bowl over an MDF jam chuck to remove the outflowing foot – see step 11 – creating a very slight ogee in the process. Comparing the old – steps 1 and 2 – and new – steps 15 and 16 – you can see how much wood darkens over time. I write two weeks after the bowl was revamped and

already it's lost its yellowish glare, which might well have been part of its attraction in its original form.

Given the shape I ended up with and the ease with which the wood worked, I could easily have held the bowl on the original chuck in the original recess – see step 3 – with no need to touch the base at all, but I think I made the right decision, because at the slightest hint of a catch the wood surrounding the expanding jaws would have broken away, leaving me with a very thin base and much less margin for error. If you like the look of grass tree root and you have access to this timber, be warned that although it turns easily and sands well, it's filthy stuff to work, producing clouds of fine cough-inducing dust. I was reminded why I gave up working it years ago. ●



11 Turning the outside and refining the shape



12 Using a 13mm spindle gouge to add detail...



13 ... to the base and rim



14 Remounting the bowl for hollowing



15 The revamped bowl from the top



16 ... and side view



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25th anniversary pen

To celebrate Woodturning magazine's 25th anniversary, **Walter Hall** shows you how to make a special sterling silver-plated fountain pen

WALTER HALL



Walter Hall is a woodturner who has specialised in making pens and pencils for more than 20 years. Based on the beautiful Northumberland coast in the UK, Walter sells his bespoke pens and pencils

through local craft centres and via his website.

walter@walterspens.co.uk

www.walterspens.co.uk

EQUIPMENT USED

25mm or 19mm spindle roughing gouge

19mm or 12mm skew chisel

Disc sander and jig

Suitably sized drill bits

Pillar drill or means of drilling on the lathe

Bandsaw

Abrasives to at least 800 grit

Plastic polish or burnishing cream

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

Fingernail grind spindle or bowl gouge

TCT tipped turning tool

PPE: facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction

TIMBER REQUIREMENTS

Baron pen kit

Silver Storm – or similar – acrylic blank

In last month's article I gave some hints and tips for making acrylic pens. This month, to celebrate 25 years of *Woodturning* magazine, I have made a Turners Retreat sterling silver plated fountain pen using a 'Silver Storm' acrylic blank, available from Snainton Woodworking Supplies, and take

you step-by-step through the process using some of the techniques described in the previous article.

Assembly instructions for the pen with drawings are available online from Turners Retreat, see www.turners-retreat.co.uk/pdf/baronrollerballandfountainpen.pdf.



1

Proper preparation of the blank is very important if satisfactory results are to be achieved.

Begin by carefully measuring the blank against the brass tubes and cutting it to length. Next, drill out using a pillar drill for the upper and lower tubes using $\frac{15}{32}$ in and $\frac{25}{64}$ in bullet-tipped drills. These imperial-sized bullet-tipped drills can be difficult to obtain in the UK, so at a push you would probably get away with 12mm and 10mm but a better option would be to use the correct sized jobber bits and use the drilling short technique described in the previous article to prevent breakout

2 The 'Silver Storm' blank is very translucent. And as you can see from the photo, even before any material is turned away, the colour of the brass tube can be clearly seen reflecting through the acrylic. Left like this the result would be a very unattractive muddy coloured mix of brass and silver colours – not what you want at all

3 Here, I used my patented 'four nails in a piece of wood' spray support and protected the bench with newspaper and paper towels. Using a similar setup, spray the brass tubes first with white primer and then with Mercedes Bright silver. Any silver will do here – just use what you have available

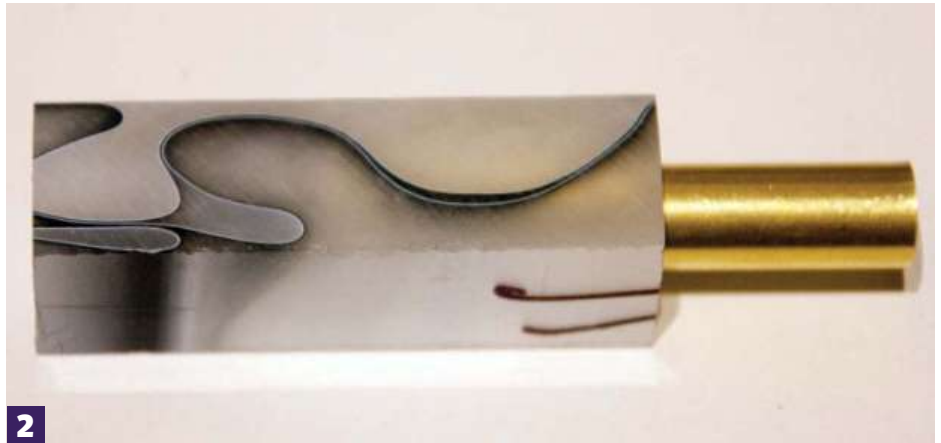
4 You don't need to paint the inside of the blank even though it is very translucent, but rather take great care to get an even distribution of glue on the surface of the tube so an even coloured reflection will show through. Once the tubes are in place, there will no longer be any sign of discolouration and you can move on to the next step

5 The commercially available jigs for use with a disc sander come as standard with a shaft the same diameter as a standard mandrel and while this is fine for slimline pens and others with a 7mm tube, when working with larger diameter tubes, it is important to use a suitably sized sleeve to keep the tubes square to the sanding disc. These can be purchased in various sizes, but it is easy enough to make your own as I have done here by turning a hardwood blank on a 7mm tube to match the inside diameter of the Baron tube

6 Mount the blanks in their respective bushes and mount each assembly between centres for turning. You can buy special bushes that are designed for use with 60° centres but the standard ones will do the job well enough, although they are more likely to cause wear to the centres if any slippage occurs. Begin by taking light cuts with a spindle roughing gouge

7 In the previous article I listed a number of tools that can be used with acrylic materials but it is by no means exhaustive. Here I am using the long swept-back edge of a fingernail-grind bowl gouge to take fine finishing cuts and as you can see, it produces long trails of fine swarf if used lightly. It is not what tool you use that matters, but how you use it

8 I think the Baron pen kit looks best with a very slightly curved shape to the barrels rather than dead straight sides. Too much and it becomes a bit fat and unwieldy but a gentle curve is enough to give the appearance a slight lift. That is just my opinion of course, you can make the barrels any shape you choose. Here is the finished cap end ready for sanding and finishing





9



10

9 Having protected your lathe bed with paper towels, wet sand through the grits from 360 up to 800 using Rhnyogrip abrasive. You may need to start with 240 or even 180 grit, depending on the quality of finish you have achieved with the tools, but it does not matter where you start so long as the final result is a smooth, matte, scratch-free surface ready for polishing

10 One of my favourite polishes for acrylics is Farécla 500 and if used with its coarser stable mate Farecla 300, you can start polishing from a surface sanded to about 320 grit. On this occasion, however, there was no need for the coarser paste and a fine polish was achieved with the 500. I applied it using a safety cloth and strongly advise against using any other kind of cloth for polishing on the lathe. You'll also need to give the blanks a final polish on a buffing wheel



11

11 Now the barrels are completed all that remains is to assemble the finished components. Lay out the components and partially assemble those that can be pre-assembled so as to avoid confusion. It can be very frustrating having to disassemble a pen you have just assembled because a part is in the wrong place or upside down. Good preparation prevents this



12



13

12 Before beginning assembly of my pen, I decided to upgrade the nib from the standard Chinese IPG nib supplied with the kit to a 5mm fine point Bock nib with a kit threaded housing supplied by Beaufort Ink. The new nib is shown on the left fitted to the Baron housing with the removed original on the right for comparison

13 An ordered and structured approach to assembly and attention to some important details will make the difference between a good pen and an exceptional one. There are many ways of pressing the parts together but I used a Milescraft pen press and started by assembling the cap components

14 To ensure the patterns on the barrels are aligned when assembled, screw the nib housing into the cap and lightly press the barrel body into position. When you are happy with the alignment, unscrew the housing from the cap and press the assembly together



14



15

15 Equally important with a pen with a postable cap is to ensure that the clip, when the cap is posted, aligns with the nib and this is achieved by carrying out a similar process to that used when aligning the barrel to ensure the correct alignment of the posting tip. My deliberate mistake was to assemble the ends in the wrong order so as you can see in the photo I had to align the nib unit with the clip retrospectively

16 It all worked out in the end and even if you do have a few minor mishaps on the way, with a little care and attention to detail you can create a pen of high quality that will stand out from the crowd and be good enough to mark any important occasion ●



16

MINI TEST

Woodworker's Sauce Starbright Plastic Polish

This new product from Turners Retreat is the latest addition to the variety of polishing options available to woodturners who are working with acrylic and polyester materials.

Supplied in a convenient squeezable bottle with a nozzle that is opened and re-sealed with a twisting action, it will have a long shelf life in the workshop without drying out. The polish is easy to use following the instructions on the bottle and only a small amount is required to produce a high gloss. The suppliers recommend that it is used on work that has already been sanded to 1,200 grit but I found that a high gloss could be achieved from as low as 600 grit, if care was taken to work through the grits carefully first.

Verdict

I was impressed by the results achieved and this product will also be useful to pen makers who are finishing their work with Cyanoacrylate or other hard finishes as an alternative to the finer grades of Micromesh or burnishing creams or compounds.



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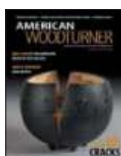
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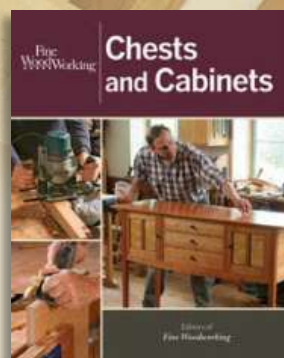
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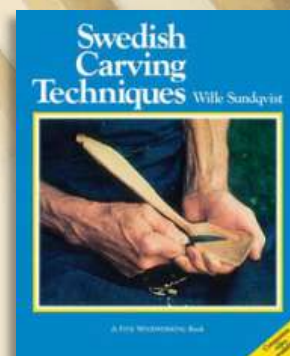
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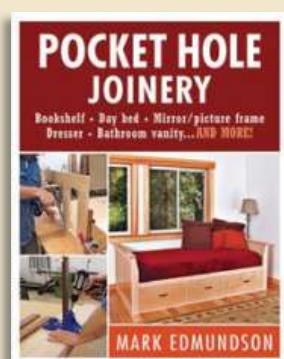
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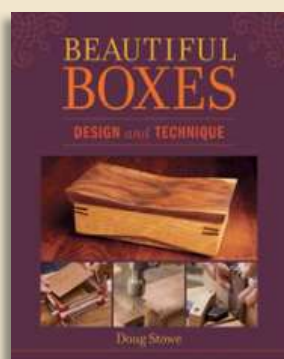
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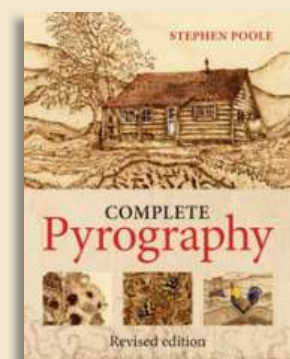
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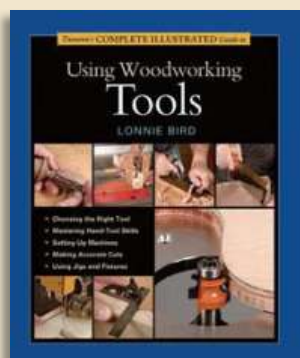
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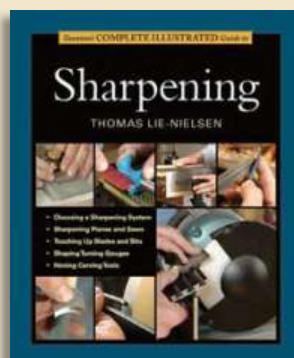
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Turning fine, delicate finials

This month **Richard Findley** looks at the problems turners face when making tall, elegant and potentially delicate finials

RICHARD FINDLEY



Richard is a registered UK professional woodturner living and working in Leicestershire. He discovered woodturning while working for his father as a joiner. Richard makes all kinds of work to commission,

from replacement antique components, walking canes and stair spindles, to decorative bowls. It is the variety of work that he loves. He also offers demonstrations and a range of woodturning supplies.

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After looking at the common problems faced when box making last month, it seemed a natural progression to take a look at the problems faced when turning tall, elegant finials for turned boxes. These finial boxes have become increasingly popular

over recent years, with the finials apparently becoming longer and thinner as turners challenge their skills.

Turning these tall finials tests a turner in a number of ways. Firstly, there is the obvious challenge of successfully turning such a thin piece of wood without it snapping, but a tall thin finial is no good if it doesn't suit the box it sits on, so they challenge a turner's design skills too.

The problems I intend to look at in this article include:

- Design
- Timber selection
- Fitting to the box and workholding
- Turning techniques
- Supporting thin work

Design

The place to start with any piece of new work is with design. Perhaps you have some ideas



An example of Cindy Drozda's exquisite finial work

of what you might like to make, but if your only thought is to make a finial box, then a little research is called for. Check your books and old magazines for possible design inspirations, and of course, the internet is often one of the first points of call for inspiration.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CINDY DROZDA

Try typing some of the following keywords into a Google Images search:

- Finial boxes
- Tall finials
- Clock finials
- Drop finials
- Elegant finials
- Turned Christmas tree decorations
- Cindy Drozda

The beauty of internet searches is that they are so quick and easy to do. Any combination of words linked to finials or boxes can potentially bring up an inspirational image, the fun is that you just don't know what will come up.

Notice I added the name Cindy Drozda on that list. Cindy has become well known for her finial boxes, because of her elegant forms and delicate finials. Just a look at her work should get your creative juices flowing. Whenever you want to try a new form of work, take a look at the work of the 'masters' in that area, to see how they put shapes together and use combinations and styles to create their work. You can often learn a lot just by looking. As you scroll through your search results, you will see a range of work, from the very highest standard to some of a far lower quality. Sometimes it can be useful to look at some of these less well designed items, as it is just as important to learn what doesn't work visually, as it is to learn what does work. Ask yourself why this item doesn't look good or right, what would you do differently? This can be a valuable exercise.

TIPS FOR FINIAL DESIGN

- Keep it simple, it is very easy to over complicate the design
- Base the shape on a tall triangle, so it is thinner at the top and thicker at the base
- A well proportioned finial will work at any size, from very small to very big
- A well designed finial should look as good upside down as it does the right way up



The finial loosely based on a tall triangle shape

Look at the big picture

This article is clearly about the finials, but some thought also needs to be given to the bigger picture. A tall slender finial, no matter how well turned, won't look right if the box it sits on doesn't complement it. A small dumpy box with a huge finial won't look right, neither would a box that is too tall and thin. The tall finial should not overpower the box or make it unbalanced – either visually or physically. It can be a difficult balance to strike, but lots of research and sketches should help you to get close. It may then take making a few boxes to get it just right. Your first attempt will rarely be spot on. Try to be self-critical about your work. Live with it for a while and perhaps even make notes of your thoughts about it:

- How does it look up on the shelf or on the table?
- Does it look stable?
- Does it look elegant?
- Is it too fat, thin, squat or stretched?
- If you were to make it again, what would you change?

Holding and fitting

Once you have a design idea, you need to give some thought to how the finial will fit on the box. Luckily, there are only two options here:

- Turn it as part of the lid
- Turn the lid and finial separately

The main advantage to turning the lid and finial separately is that if you have an issue with the turning of the finial – for example, it snaps during the turning, or you just don't like it when you have finished, you can just make a new one, without the hassle of remaking the



With my box turned, I sketched out a rough design on my piece of beech, and held the two together to get a feel for the proportions

whole lid. The downside is you need to think about the wood you intend to use a little more carefully. Will you try to use the same wood with a grain match, or use a contrasting timber?

Once this decision is made, you will need to work out how to hold the finial to turn it. A small set of jaws is ideal here, I have some engineer's style jaws that are perfect for holding small work, but can be rather nerve-racking to use due to their shape. I also have a set of Axminster 'F' jaws that grip a 19mm spigot, which can be useful and turned out to be ideal for this project.

Where to start?

Depending upon your level of skill and experience, it could be helpful to start with an easier design of finial box, such as the one made by Mark Baker in his book *Woodturning Projects: A Workshop Guide to Shapes*. This box is elegant and features all the right cuts, shapes and techniques, without the added difficulty of being incredibly long and thin. Once you have mastered this type of finial box, you can progressively make the finials taller and more slender to test your skills.

“Whenever you want to try a new form of work, take a look at the work of the ‘masters’ in that area”



Mark Baker's finial box design is a good place to start when practising finial boxes

Timber selection

I don't think there is a blanket right or wrong timber to use for finials, but there are certainly things to look out for that will make life much easier for you.

Avoid wood that is highly figured. This is fine for the box, but on a slender finial, burrs and curly grain will cause huge problems, from difficulties in cutting smoothly, to it simply snapping. Ideally you need straight, close grained timber. This sounds incredibly boring, but trust me, it will be the difference between success and failure.

SHORT GRAIN

Short grain is when the grain of the wood cuts across the piece of wood you are using, essentially travelling across the work, rather than in line with it, which takes the strength from the wood and often causes a break. This can happen at any scale of work, but even a small change in the grain direction on a delicate finial can compromise it. Look for the straightest timber you can find for use as slender finials.

Very open grained timber such as oak (*Quercus robur*) or ash looks good on larger bold shapes, but on tiny detailed work the open grain can become a weakness, especially if it isn't perfectly in line with the work, and again, results in a break. For this article, I am using a piece of straight grained beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) for the finial, as it will retain its strength much better in a small section. I also intend to ebonise it, and I know that beech will take the black finish well.



Two pieces of beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) – one straight-grained, the other has a large curl in the grain, which would result in 'short grain' when turned down small. It would be difficult to turn and has a high chance of breaking

Do I need specialist tools for such tiny detailed work?

These days there are specialist tools for everything in turning. Personally, I feel that if you can use a skew and spindle gouge well, then this should be all you need for this type of work, but if you really struggle, then there are tools out there designed for this specific task which may well help you.

For the article, I will be using smaller versions of standard tools, including a 6mm spindle gouge and 6mm beading & parting tool – which I use as a skew chisel. The actual cutting techniques are just the same as for any other type of spindle work, just on a much



For this finial I used my basic set of small tools: 25mm spindle roughing gouge, 6mm beading & parting tool and 6mm spindle gouge

smaller scale. The differences are the order of work and the support that you need to offer to the spinning wood.

Let's get turning

Let's assume the box is made and has a small hole in the lid, ready to accept the finial. I have cut a piece of straight grained beech ready to use. My initial plan was to cut a spigot to fit the finial to the lid, and then use this to

hold it in the chuck, however, it soon became apparent that a 10mm spigot doesn't offer enough support to the finial as it is turned, and vibration was a huge problem. The only solution was to use the tailstock to offer support.

Tailstock or no tailstock? That is the question!

As a production turner, my natural instinct is to find the simplest and most efficient method of working. If this is between centres, then so be it. As a friend of mine once said, 'there are no prizes for not using the tailstock!' The ultimate challenge of skill for this kind of work however, is to turn these long finials without tailstock support, so I did one of each, just to see how difficult it is.

The key is to get a secure hold in the chuck. By cutting a 19mm spigot to fit my Axminster 'F' jaws with a shoulder to seat properly in the chuck, it immediately gave strength to the work and I was able to remove the tailstock

without too many problems. The other advantage of the 'F' jaws over the engineering style jaws is that it is far safer to work close to the chuck, which also gives confidence as you work. If you decide to use the tailstock, and it is worth remembering that there is no shame in this, it is just another tool after all, just remember not to apply too much pressure. The centre simply needs to engage in the wood, enough to support it and to spin the live point. Any more pressure than this and it can introduce a bend in the work and can actually make life harder, rather than easier.



The engineer's type jaws turned out to be less good for this job



The wood is mounted in my Axminster 'F' jaws, ready for turning



The live centre doing its job, only just engaged, supporting the work and spinning, but without applying too much pressure

Turning

With the wood held securely in the chuck, I used my roughing gouge to remove some of the bulk at the tip, before switching to my 6mm spindle gouge to shape the very tip of the finial. The tiny bead detail was cut with my 6mm beading & parting tool, used as a skew chisel.

Even at this early stage of turning, because I am cutting at the furthest point from the support of the chuck – in this case around 160mm from the chuck – there is vibration in the wood, and it needs support from my fingers. This is one of the times that being left handed is a real bonus. I am able to use my front hand, which in my case is my right hand, to stabilise the tool on the toolrest, and to support the rear of the work, without having to lean over the chuck or have the headstock in the way of my arm. Right handers will find this more awkward, but it is still perfectly possible. The fingers of the front hand can work either from beneath the work in an underhand way, or from above using an overhand, to offer the necessary

support to the wood and to the tool, whichever works best for you. It does take a little getting used to, but is safe and effective.

The shape then needs to be steadily developed, working back towards the thickest part of the finial. Continually check the shape. While you still have the thickest part intact you are able to make adjustments, the real problems come once you begin the lower details.

In the case of this finial, there is a deep cove below the swell of the finial. This is, in my opinion, a very elegant detail, but it is a critical part of the turning. As soon as wood is removed from the left side of the swell, strength is reduced and making alterations to the thin tip becomes impossible.

Remove wood from the cove area gradually though, because as you do, it can sometimes affect the appearance of the swell, and the balance of the curve as a result, so continue to monitor the overall appearance of the finial, and make adjustments while you still can. It will reach a point where you are committed

and you will then just have to focus on the lower details.

The lower details are fairly straightforward to turn as, by now you are very close to the chuck, so vibration is a thing of the past, even if you take the details very narrow, like the cove on my finial, which finished at 5mm diameter. The biggest problem is the chuck being in your way, which is once again, less of a problem for the left handers.

SAFETY TIP

Soften the edges of your chuck jaws

When you first buy chuck jaws, they have very sharp edges. I recommend taking a file to the edges of each jaw to soften them, which means that, if you touch them while they spin, they won't hurt you. This makes turning tiny work like this, close to the chuck, much safer



The spindle roughing gouge is used first to remove some of the bulk



When turning the details I need to offer support to the wood with the finger of my front hand, using an underhand method



Supporting the tool and the wood using an overhand method



Remove the timber to the left of the thickest part gradually. As you do, you might find you need to adjust the curve on the swell...



...I did, and made a few adjusting cuts with the help of my beading & parting tool to get it just right



Turning the lower details

Sanding

The last part that needs cutting on the finial is the fixing spigot, which in my case was 10mm diameter. I removed enough timber to cut the curve at the base of the finial and sanded at that point. If you take the fixing spigot right down to 10mm, it doesn't leave a great deal of support for the sanding operation.

With tiny details like we have on this finial, ideally sanding should be kept to a minimum. I used 240, 320 and 400 grits. I found that I needed to continue to support the work with my hand as I sanded. It is important to use an abrasive that will fold and roll into and around the shapes that you have turned here, as it would be such a shame to smudge the detail with clumsy sanding.

I know of very few turners who enjoy

sanding, but it is a vitally important part of the process, and is, after all, the final part of the turning process, so if you fail here through poor technique, laziness or by rushing, it will ruin all of your previous hard work, so take your time, use both hands, and sand each detail as carefully as you turned them.

With the sanding complete, I turned the fixing spigot to size and parted the finial off with a thin parting tool. Parting will once again be easier for the left handers, as the tool can be held in the left hand, and the finial supported and caught with the right, without contorting yourself around the headstock and chuck.

I checked the fit of the finial and sprayed it black. The oak box was finished with

hard wax oil and, once dry, the finial was glued in place. ●

BASIC RULES

- Use close-grained wood for finials
- Use straight-grained wood for finials
- Use a suitable set of chuck jaws and cut the holding spigot carefully to offer maximum support
- Begin turning at the far end of the finial and work back towards the chuck
- Once you have moved on to a thinner section, you can't return to the earlier part of the turning, so check the design often



I continued to support the finial with my fingers as I sanded



Parting the finial



The completed box and finial



Close up of the ebonised beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) finial

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The Parker Windsor Castle chess set



My version of the Windsor set on an antique board with squares 42 × 42mm

The pieces of the author's version of Parker's Windsor design

In the second in his series on turning chess sets, **Mike Darlow** discusses the history, design and making of a 19th-century St George style chess set with a royal association

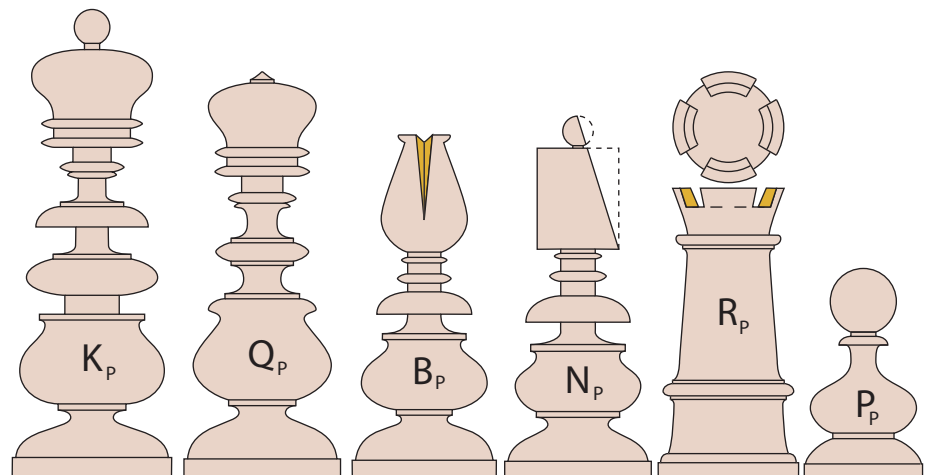
MIKE DARLOW



Mike Darlow lives in Exeter in New South Wales, Australia. He is the author of six woodturning books, three woodturning DVDs and about 150 magazine articles on woodturning.

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1 992 was Queen Elizabeth's *annus horribilis* because of events within her family and the major fire at Windsor Castle. But was there an earlier fire that yielded oak (*Quercus robur*) – from which at least one chess set was turned. In his excellent book on chess sets, *Master Pieces*, author Gareth Williams pictures a set in the St George style. The use of that style seems to be especially appropriate because Williams states: "In the 1820s, fire damaged the 13th-century church of St George, Windsor Castle. A turner in Eton used the old oak [rescued]



Parker's original St George set featured in *Master Pieces*

from the fire to make this souvenir set." The book includes a photograph of the bottoms of two of the men showing circular paper labels which read, "I. Parker – Eton – Turner to Her Majesty – Made from the old wood of Windsor Castle."

In an attempt to find further details of the fire, I contacted Dr Clare Rider, archivist and

chapter librarian at St George's Chapel. She didn't know of any record of a fire within the castle in the early 19th century, and generously wrote the following: "The description 'old wood from Windsor Castle' implies that the wood was sourced from the residential part of the Castle, i.e. the Upper Ward, rather than from St George's Chapel in



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF WIKIPEDIA COMMONS

Interior of St George's church, Windsor



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF WIKIPEDIA COMMONS

Aerial view of Windsor Castle showing the locations of St George's church, and the upper and lower wards

the Lower Ward – if the wood had come from St George's Chapel I believe this would have been specified. From 1820 to 1830, when George IV was King, he undertook extensive works on the residential and state apartments in the Upper Ward, supervised by Jeffry Wyattville and financed by a substantial Parliamentary grant.

"During the course of these works many of the original materials and ancient architectural features of the Castle were removed and presumably some were sold on. Some of the old wood may have

subsequently come into Mr Palmer's hands.

"However, I notice that Mr Palmer is described as 'Turner to Her Majesty', which may refer to Queen Victoria rather than the wife of a king, so it is possible that he obtained the wood from renovations made in Queen Victoria's reign. She ascended the throne on 20 June, 1837. The only major building project in the Upper Ward at this time was the reconstruction of the grand staircase to the State Apartments. This had been constructed in about 1800, to replace an earlier staircase dating from the reign of King

Charles II. In Victoria's reign the staircase was replaced by a new one. Perhaps the wood from the old staircase was sold or given to Parker?"

I have attempted to contact Gareth Williams about the source of his statements about the oak's provenance, but without success. But whichever part of Windsor Castle the oak for Parker's set was sourced from, and why it became available, it illustrates the possibilities of using wood from a notable tree or other source and publicising that fact.

Chess set design in general

Parker's original piece designs are attractive but somewhat confused; for example:

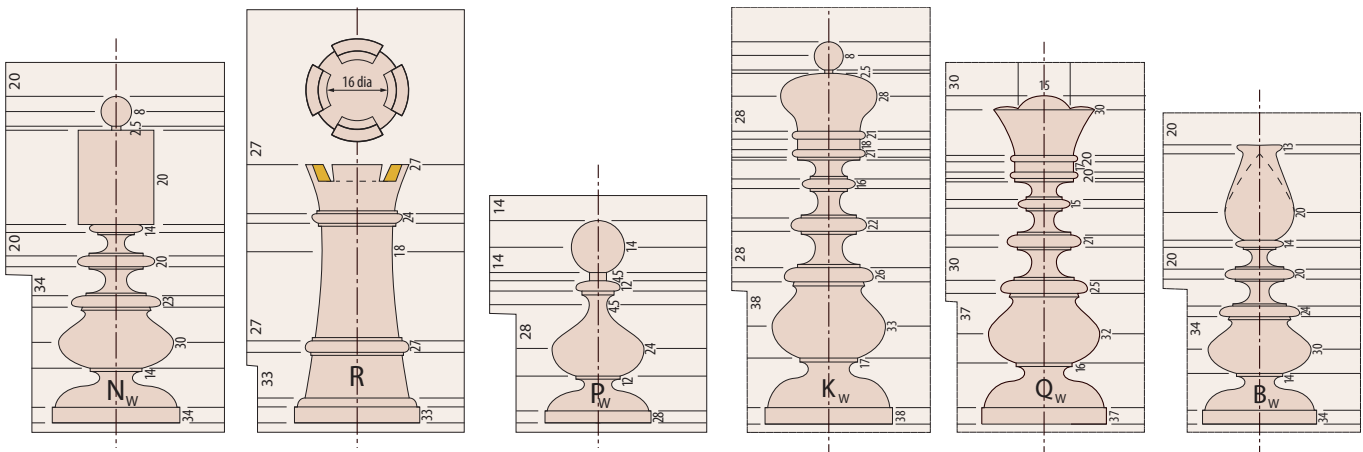
- Immediately below the heads of the pieces other than the rook and pawn are double, single or a pair of V-cross-sectioned small beads arranged with no particular logic on shafts that are cylindrical or coved, again with no particular logic.
- Below them are one or two beads or half beads, some with fillets some without, again following no discernible logic. I therefore decided to design a version with clearer and more consistent signatures. As shown here,

my version has the following features:

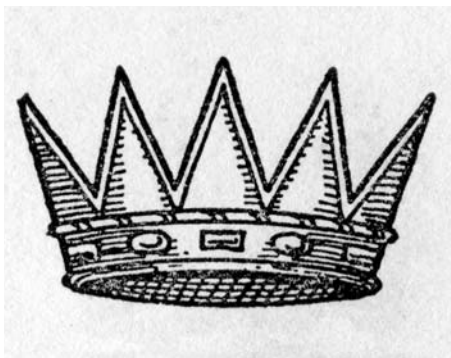
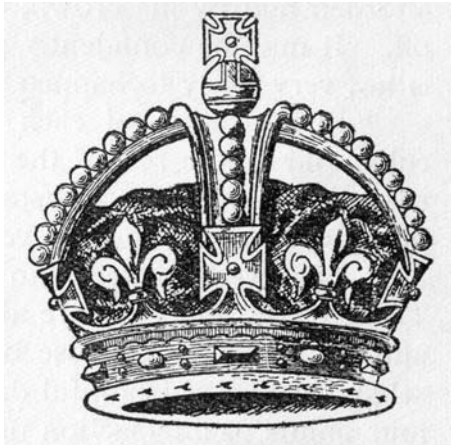
- Its piece signatures, which include the pieces' relative heights, are conventional, illustrating that there was nothing revolutionary about the later 1849 Staunton design pictured in the first article in this series.
- I decided to further clarify the queen's crown aspect. British crowns can be arched, or pointed and without arches. The crowns on Parker's king and queen are both arched, but with the queen's lacking an orb. However, the Staunton

queen's crown is unarched. Because, as I opined in the first article, the Staunton piece signatures are today's norm, I've used an unarched crown on the Windsor queen.

- I also slightly increased the pawn's height to make the set easier to play with.
- In Parker's set the heads of the bishops, knights and rooks are carved after being turned. The carving is in my view unnecessary for clear piece identification, and is therefore optional. I've omitted it from my set.



Pencil gauges for the Windsor design



TOP: An arched crown BOTTOM: A pointed crown

Making

Parker's set was in English oak, clear finished for the white side and stained black for the black side. Instead I chose European ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Australian blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) to avoid having to stain. Both were sourced from trees felled in my home village of Exeter in New South Wales.

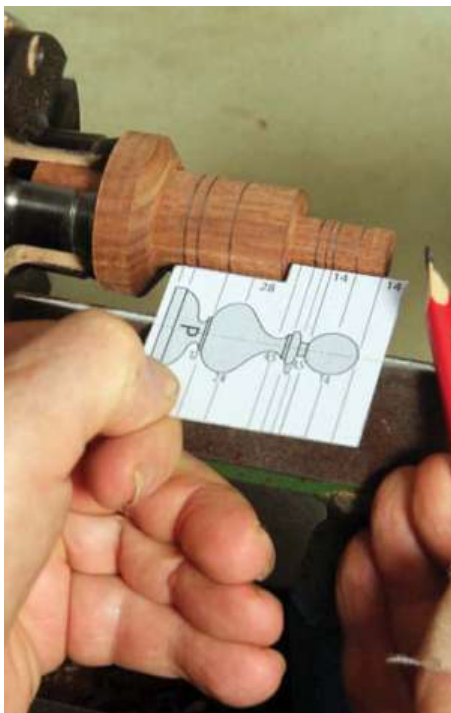
Wood supply and cost wasn't a problem. I therefore decided to turn this set by holding the workpieces by a pre-turned spigot in a scroll chuck fitted with pin jaws. This method allowed me to fully turn and sand the men's tops, and to polish in the lathe before parting off. I decided against using a screw chuck to avoid the risk of breaking the wood within the bottom coves.

After mounting a workpiece in the pin jaws, I first skimmed its right-hand end flat. I then turned the workpiece to a cylinder

of the bigger diameter noted on the piece's pencil gauge, marked the change in diameter, and then brought the right-hand cylindrical section to the required diameter. After marking out, I finish-turned the man working from right to left. Apart from the small size of the details, and the resulting need for the small turning tools described in the first article, there aren't any particular turning difficulties.

The men's bottoms should be definitely but only slightly concave. Rather than paper labels, I decided to glue on discs of thin leather. To cut the discs you could use leather punches if ones of the required diameters are available: I opted to turn them. I cut rough oversize squares, squeezed them between two mandrels of the correct diameter and turned the leather to size.

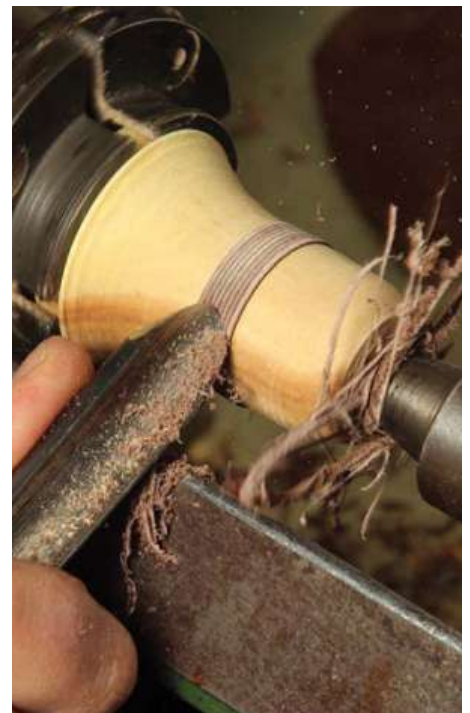
"I therefore decided to turn this set by holding the workpieces by a pre-turned spigot in a scroll chuck fitted with pin jaws"



Marking out a pawn on a workpiece cantilevered from a pin chuck. The workpiece has been turned to a stepped cylinder to suit the pencil gauge



Eight squares of thin leather compressed between two wooden mandrels



Trimming the leather to discs with the same diameter as the adjacent wood

Conclusion

Each meeting of my local woodturning club includes a show and tell session in which members' work is reviewed. All too often the focus is on anything except design. It's obvious that no matter how well a turning is turned, sanded and polished, if its design is poor, the turning looks poor. Perhaps the neglect of design is because many amateur turners have not had to design before taking up

turning. Yet design is in my view the most fascinating part of turning – the turning should be the easy bit you do at the end. Whether my design is an improvement on Parker's is unimportant. What I hope this article has illustrated is that you don't have to exactly copy, and that there is unlimited scope to design your own variations. ●

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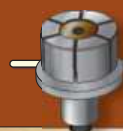
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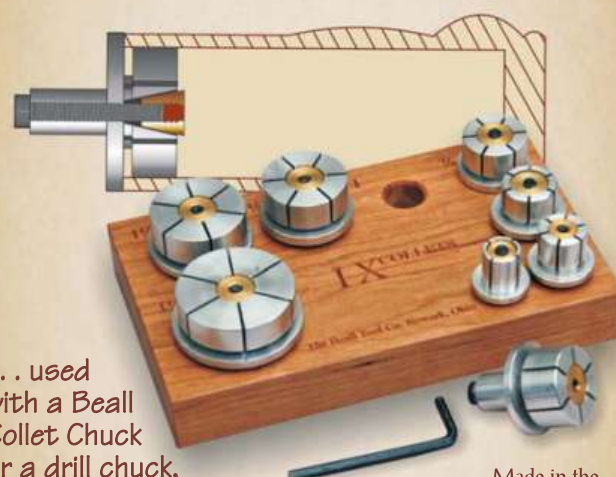
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Owl-shaped salt and pepper mills

John Hawkswell turns a segmented salt and pepper mill set

This pair of salt and pepper mills was made using a simple segmental technique to produce a striking modern design. Made from reclaimed walnut (*Juglans regia*), the addition of a light-coloured wood such as sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) provides a strong contrast.

When these two pieces first emerged from the workshop my family thought they looked like a pair of owls. I must confess this was not intentional but it may at least provide a good talking point at dinner parties.

I wanted a shape that showed the pattern to good advantage and would be nice to handle. After all, this is a practical item. Before starting any woodturning project I usually experiment with various designs. Although I sometimes use CAD software, for this sort of project you cannot beat a piece of paper and pencil! Various shapes were cut out in paper and rejected before deciding on this one.

These mills are designed to incorporate standard mechanisms as sold by Axminster Tools & Machinery and other popular woodturning stockists.

JOHN HAWKSWELL



John has been a woodturner for over 20 years. His life-long hobby is furniture making and he started turning when he needed some legs for a table. Shortly afterwards he joined his local club, The Gloucestershire Association of Woodturners. He is now the Chairman.

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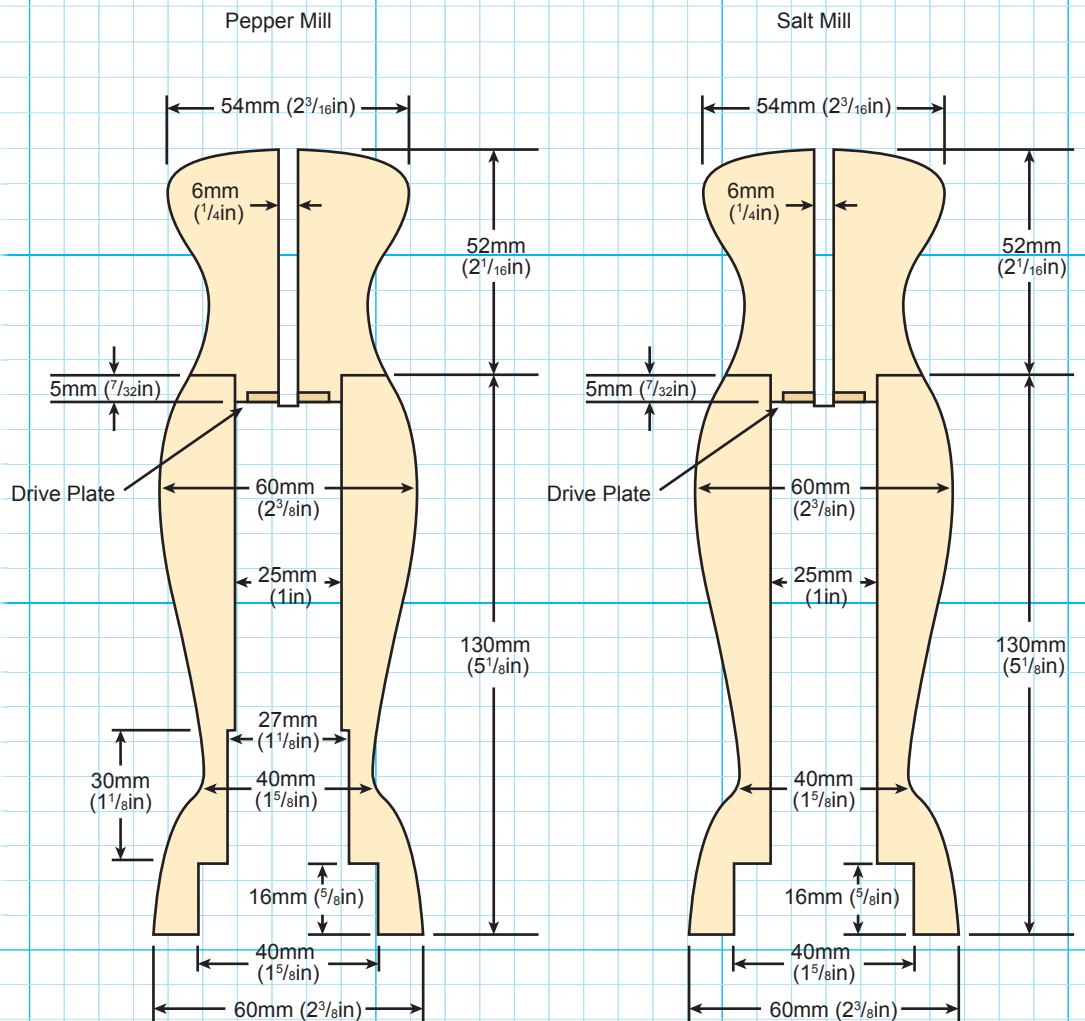


PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN HAWKSWELL

PLANS AND EQUIPMENT

EQUIPMENT USED

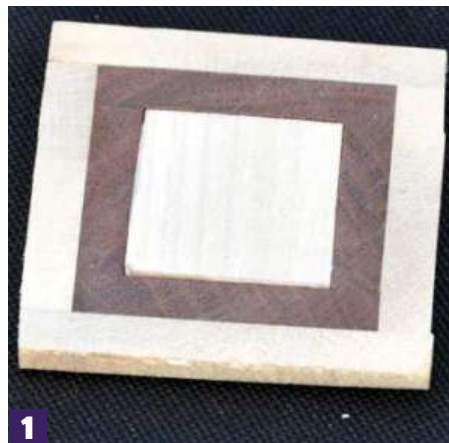
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safe finish
Standard salt and
pepper mill mechanism
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respirator/dust mask
and extraction



1 The first step is to prepare the blank. The blank is sized at 450 × 65 × 65mm. The inner square of sycamore measures 33 × 33mm. Around this core is a wall of walnut, which measures 8mm-thick. Finally, there is an outer wall of sycamore 8mm-thick. Each piece of timber needs to be accurately dimensioned and for this a thicknesser certainly makes life easier

2 Use a resin-based glue to glue up the prepared timber sections, I used Aerolite 306. Stick two pieces together at a time. The width of each piece should be slightly oversize. Once the glue is set, plane away any excess timber and glue ensuring a flat surface for the next glue up. The photo here shows the blank before the final two pieces of sycamore are glued in position

3 Divide the blank in two so that each half is about 220mm long and carefully mark the centre. Everybody has their favourite method. I use a combination square set to mark in from each edge, as shown. Any deviation from the true centre will become apparent once you start to turn





4



5

4 Mount on the lathe, rough down to a cylinder and form a spigot at the tailstock end. Mark and cut almost all the way through the cylinder to partially separate what will become the main body allowing at least 12mm oversize. Once almost all the way through, stop the lathe and saw off so you end up with the main body and what will be the top

5 Mount the main body in the chuck and true up the cylinder. Clean up the tailstock end grain



6



7

6 This project involves a fair amount of drilling. Start making the main body of the mill by drilling a 40mm recess to a depth of 16mm

7 For the pepper mill you now need a further hole 27mm wide drilled to a depth of 30mm. The remaining length of the main body is then drilled using a 25mm drill bit. For the salt mill, after drilling the 40mm hole drill a 25mm hole through the rest of the body, as shown here. An extension bar in the Jacobs chuck enables you to do this in one operation. Unfortunately while I was doing this the grub screw in my extension bar became too loose to hold the drill shank and I had to resort to the method shown below

8 If you don't have an extension bar you will need to drill to the halfway point and then reverse the work in the chuck and drill from the other end until the hole meets in the middle. This is the process being shown here. The work is held in the chuck by pin jaws. If you do not possess pin jaws, a jam chuck made from a scrap of timber works well



8

9 Once a hole has been drilled all the way through, mount the piece in the chuck using the spigot shown in the photo above. You can now begin shaping with a spindle gouge, concentrating first on the foot. Continue with the gouge until the required shape is reached but leave oversize at this stage because it will be refined once you have completed the top and the two parts are finished together



9



10

10 Mount the top of the mill in the chuck and drill a 6mm hole. I usually start the drilling process by making a pilot hole using a centre finder to ensure accuracy and minimise the risk of the drill bit wandering

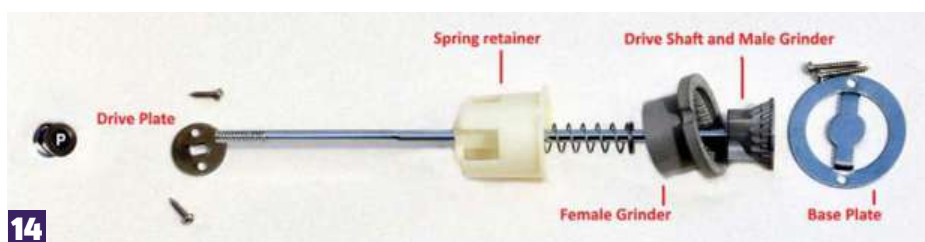
HANDY HINTS

1. Ensure each piece of timber is accurately dimensioned, flat and clean before gluing
2. Aim to get about 5mm of thread protruding from the top of the assembled mill. If there is insufficient thread protruding, you can somewhat increase the depth of the bottom recess

11 Form a 5mm long spigot to fit the 25mm hole in the main body. The top should be free to turn in the hole but not be too loose. Use a skew chisel or gouge to clean the bottom, then use a parting tool to create a recess to house the plate. Test to see the plate fits but do not fix it in at this stage. Start shaping the top with a spindle gouge



12 There is not a lot of waste wood and consequently not much working room close to the chuck. Continue shaping while checking against the template. When access near the chuck end became an issue I changed to 'between centres' mode to complete the basic shape. Now that both parts of the mill have been rough turned, fit the top to the main body and mount on the lathe. Using a spindle gouge, blend the two parts together and refine. Sand from 120 down to 400 grit. After each grit, clean the surface by rubbing it with shavings. Finish the outside of each mill with your preferred finish. I used a clear finish that did not colour the sycamore and reduce the contrast between the two timbers. I applied three coats of Liberon Kitchen and Bathroom Varnish; this gives a hard-wearing finish and is easy to apply. It is touch dry in 30 minutes and another coat can be applied in three hours. Being water-based it does raise the grain but a light sanding between coats produces a satin finish. The inside can be left in bare wood or, if you prefer, apply a food-safe finish



13 & 14 The salt – see step 13 – and pepper mill mechanism – see step 14 – shown here have exactly the same fitting procedure for each. Check each mechanism packet to ensure all the components are present. Screw the drive plate to the recess in the top. Assemble the drive shaft/ male grinder, female grinder, spring and spring retainer together and insert into the mill base to test the fit. Holding this assembly in place, fit the mill top



15 There is a flattened section in the top of the drive shaft rod and you may find the mill top won't sit properly on the mill base because this flat section does not extend far enough – the drive plate has a square hole that operates in the flat section of the drive shaft. The answer is to extend the flat section sufficiently using a file. To facilitate this, cut a groove in a scrap of wood and clamp the drive shaft firmly in place. A few passes of the file should be enough to suffice

16 To complete the fitting of the mechanism, grip the top of the drive shaft in a vice while the two base screws are inserted. Finally, put the mill top in position and screw on the cap



17 The completed owl-shaped salt and pepper mills should look something like this ●



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Bowl basics – common problems

Andy Coates addresses and demystifies some of the common problems experienced by beginners when turning basic bowls

ANDY COATES



Andy is on the Register of Professional Turners (RPT) and is Chairman of the AWGB. He is a professional woodturner and has a workshop and gallery in Suffolk. He mostly makes one-off pieces, but like any

jobbing woodturner, is just as likely to be found doing small batch runs, antique restorations or any number of strange commissions. He also demonstrates and teaches turning.

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The humble bowl is often the first item novice turners make and this shouldn't be a surprise to us – it's a 'quick-hit' object and a reasonable bowl is within the scope of a day's work for most novices. The problems only become apparent a little

later on when we show our first efforts to somebody who knows a little more, or when we begin to understand enough to know we are having problems.

In this article I will be dealing with some of the common problems as indicated by the Editor's post bag. Hopefully they will guide you on your way to turning safer and better bowls and allow you to get more enjoyment out of your new hobby.

Introduction to the bowl

Materials

For the novice turner, my advice is to begin with native hardwoods: sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), maple (*Acer campestre*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) would be first choices as these woods cut cleanly, are close-grained and they are each safe for food use. After these you may also achieve pleasing results with woods such as ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*),

elm (*Ulmus procera*) and oak (*Quercus robur*).

I am often asked which is the best option for beginners: seasoned blanks or 'green', or 'wet' – freshly felled – blanks. While not a definitive list, the following may help you to decide which is better for you.

Seasoned blanks

Pros

- The resulting bowl will be more stable: less prone to warping or splitting. However, this is not guaranteed!
- The blank is likely to have been pre-cut to a disc and have been edge-sealed with wax.
- The blank was probably cut from straight-grained stock, with few, if any, natural defects present.

Cons

- Seasoned blanks can be expensive.
- You will feel compelled to produce a finished item having paid for the blank.
- The wood may be more difficult to cut.

- The grain may be more prone to 'pulling'.
- It may prove difficult to produce a flowing shaving, with chips being common for the novice.
- The cutting edge of the tool may dull quicker requiring a re-grind two or three times during turning.
- Abrading will produce large quantities of dust.

Wet blank

Pros

- You may be able to source the wood for free, or at least very cheaply.
- If the wood was free or obtained at little cost, you can afford the odd mistake and begin again.
- The wood will be easier to cut. If all goes to plan, you should be able to produce long

unbroken streamers of shavings.

- The tool edge will remain cooler due to the effects of the sap.
- The cutting edge will remain sharper for longer.
- Wet wood is more forgiving and flexible.
- Abrading produces less dust, and in fact, wet abrasion can be carried out using either water or oil. However, it is vital to ensure that the lathe electricians are protected from splashes.

Cons

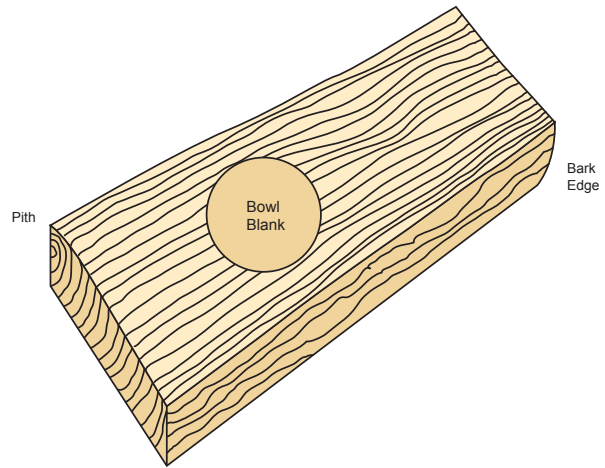
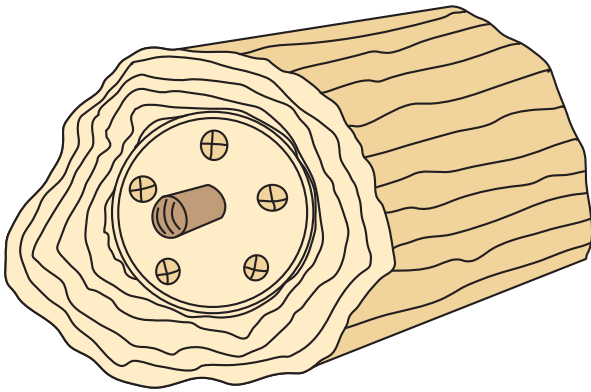
- You may have to prepare the blank yourself from log or branch stock.
- It can take experience to know where to cut a blank from a log or large branch.
- There may be natural defects in the wood, which could make turning potentially hazardous.

- The resulting bowl will begin to dry out during the turning process, may warp, and if turned too thick, or dried too quickly, may split.

Orientation of the wood

Bowls are conventionally cut from cross grain boards and the grain runs contrary to the lathe bed when mounted. They can be mounted on a faceplate, faceplate ring, screw chuck, pin chuck, or occasionally between centres. Bowls can be turned from end grain stock, but for the novice this presents a number of problems, particularly the difficulty of ensuring a safe hold and the added difficulty of cutting end grain.

Faceplate moulded log blank
(end grain)



Mounting blanks

We live in an age where the options for mounting are many and varied. The old stalwart, the faceplate, is less used these days, but if you don't own a scroll chuck, then this may be your only option. Faceplates are best used for board stock blanks, but with the addition of three pointed spurs can be used as end grain spur chucks for green logs. These can be homemade or bought.



From top left to right: spur drive for wet logs; faceplate; screw chuck; 6mm scroll-chuck screw plate; pin chuck for awkward blanks and wet wood; 8mm scroll chuck screw plate

Tailstock drives

Tailstock drive centres have also moved on from static point drives. We now have the luxury of revolving centres, cones centres, revolving ring centres and multi-head systems. All have their place, but the multi-head offers incredible versatility and is my firm favourite.



A variety of tailstock drive centres

Turning a simple utility bowl

To cover the potential problems you might come across we are going to turn a simple utility bowl in sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). The blank is cross grain and seasoned, so here the best mounting option is to use the screw chuck.

The blank needs to be pre-drilled for the screw chuck. Measure the inner shaft of the screw – NOT the threads – and mark a twist drill bit of that measurement at a depth slightly in excess of the length of the screw; this will ensure that the screw doesn't 'bottom out', causing the blank to be unstable. If the screw is too long for the thickness of blank you have, it can be padded out with simple hardboard discs. Drill a straight hole in the blank. In this case,

I am using a scroll chuck screw. Lock the headstock spindle off and screw the blank on to the chuck and ensure it is seated solidly against the face.



Pre-drilling the blank for the screw chuck



Three gouges: two ground conventionally – almost straight across – and one with a long grind

Tools

Except for a 10mm parting tool, a 10mm spindle gouge and a scraper, this bowl will be turned using only two tools. You may have only one bowl gouge. If this is the case, then making it a long-ground bowl gouge will provide far more functionality. Shown above are three gouges: two ground conventionally – almost straight across – and one with a long grind. Any of these would do to turn a simple bowl.

Many problems experienced by novices when turning bowls can be traced back to problems related to the tool:

- Poor grind shape
- Blunt tool
- Incorrect or inappropriate angle
- Poor tool presentation
- Poor tool control

Poor bevel shape/angle and bluntness are often related problems, each requiring an understanding of what makes a tool work. Learning to grind your tools properly will make turning far more enjoyable and enable you to turn the shapes you want rather than the shape the tool dictates as it bludgeons its way through the wood. Take no notice of the naysayers: if you need a jig in order to sharpen effectively, then buy or make one. Sharpening tools freehand doesn't make you a woodturner; turning wood does.

Understanding the material

It is vital that you try to understand the properties of wood before you can begin to understand how best to cut it. This issue could fill several books alone, but a simple photo will go some way to explaining.

The convention is that you should always aim to cut 'downhill' – that is in the direction the grain travels; this ensures that the cutting edge slices through the wood fibres and the bevel of the tool lays the severed fibres flat behind the cut. This leads to a cleaner cut with less tear-out. So for shaping the exterior of your bowl, you would cut from the centre of the face, pushing the tool forward towards the edge, where you would apply light pressure to the gouge to begin to form the shape. It is vital that you do not apply too

much pressure as this will push the 'heel' of the bevel into the wood and cause bruising of the fibres. There is an alternative approach if you are using a long-ground tool: the sheer pull cut. The advantage of this is that you keep the tool on your side of the lathe, close in to the body with the handle dropped low. This allows for excellent control.

The alternative, with a conventionally ground bowl gouge, requires that the tool handle is pushed across the lathe bed away from your body and gradually pulled back towards you as the cut progresses. There is a distinct loss of control with this kind of cut. While an intermediate turner might cope with this, it is often where novices struggle. The pull cut is the best option here.



It is vital you understand the properties of wood before you cut it



Showing the direction of the pull cut



Position of the tool is also very important



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

Order of turning

1 A bowl can be turned to an order of play – at least until you are confident to go your own way. To start, true up the edge face using a shearing cut with the long-ground tool. Keep the tool handle low and close to the body. Your feet should be shoulder width apart and you should be facing the blank centrally

2 A useful habit to develop is to then take a 10mm beading & parting tool and make a parting cut 15-20mm deep on the back face of the blank. Ensure the surface is flat and true. This gives you a reference for the lip/rim of your bowl

3 Now turn the lathe off. Re-set the toolrest across the face of the blank and mark the optimum diameter for the tenon, which will be held in your scroll chuck. As this is a utility bowl the foot needs to be at least one-third of the OA diameter. As the blank is 180mm diameter, the 60mm tenon can be turned off after completion to provide a 60mm flat base for the bowl. Ensure the depth is as prescribed for your chuck. Cut the tenon with a small beading tool. Ensure the face of the tenon is slightly concave and cut a small cone at the centre of the tenon. Your particular chuck may require a dovetail tenon

“Your last cuts should take little from the overall diameter at the rim”

4 Using a series of pull cuts and push cuts, shape the wood from the base towards the back edge of the blank...

5 ... by working progressively and incrementally you will ensure a clean curve and maximum diameter of the finished bowl. Your last cuts should take little from the overall diameter at the rim

6 A sheer cut using the wing of the tool will refine the shape of the bowl. Notice the finer shavings achieved with this cut...

7 ... notice the slight tear-out in this photo, which is caused by the tool bouncing on the small branch inclusion. A further sheer cut should help reduce it until it can be abraded away with 120 grit abrasive

8 Abrade the bowl to 240 grit. This is fine enough for a utility bowl. Seal the surface using a cellulose sealer. The outside can be waxed or oiled if required. Unscrew the bowl from the screw chuck and reverse into the chuck...

9 ... note how well it sits in the chuck due to the care taken in cutting the tenon. Using a pull cut as illustrated, begin to clean up the face of the blank

10 There are a number of methods of hollowing the bowl, but here we will use the most conventional. Using a straight-ground bowl gouge, present the tool with the flute pointing to 3 o'clock. This is the 'entry cut' and allows the cutting edge under the centre of the flute to make the first cut. As soon as it does you have a little bevel support...

11 ... now gently rotate the tool so that the bevel moves towards you to about 1 o'clock. Push the tool through the cut, slowing as you approach the centre of the blank

12 You can cut directly along the 9 o'clock to centre of the bowl line, or try this cut...

"There are a number of methods of hollowing the bowl"

13 ... take up the cut as before. As the cut takes begin to drop the tool handle and cut upwards...

14 ... at the halfway point between rim and centre begin to twist the tool so the flute points to 2 o'clock as it arrives at centre...

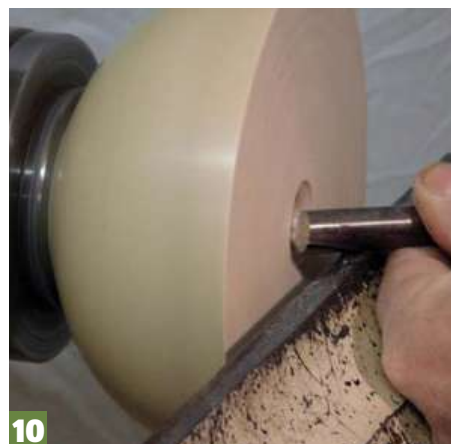
15 ... continue hollowing, keeping the wall thickness even throughout the curve. Wall thickness here is about 8mm

16 Now slightly incurve the rim using the gouge. If your tooling has left tool marks on the interior wall, then you may need to resort to a scraper to clean the surface ready for abrading...

17 ... remember that you should ride the scraper edge over the high spots and repeat until a clean pass is achieved



9



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18 Abrade the interior to 240 grit, seal with cellulose sealer, buff and apply a food-safe finish, such as a proprietary salad bowl finish. Once burnished and dry, remove the bowl from the chuck

19 In order to remove the tenon and form the base, there are a number of options ranging from vacuum chucks, Cole jaws, or a good old-fashioned homemade jam chuck

20 The tailstock is brought up and the revolving centre picks up the small central cove you cut earlier to ensure centrality. Using a 10mm spindle gouge, carefully cut the tenon away until flat. The stub is carved off and abraded afterwards. Seal the base

21 The completed simple utility bowl in sycamore should look something like this



20

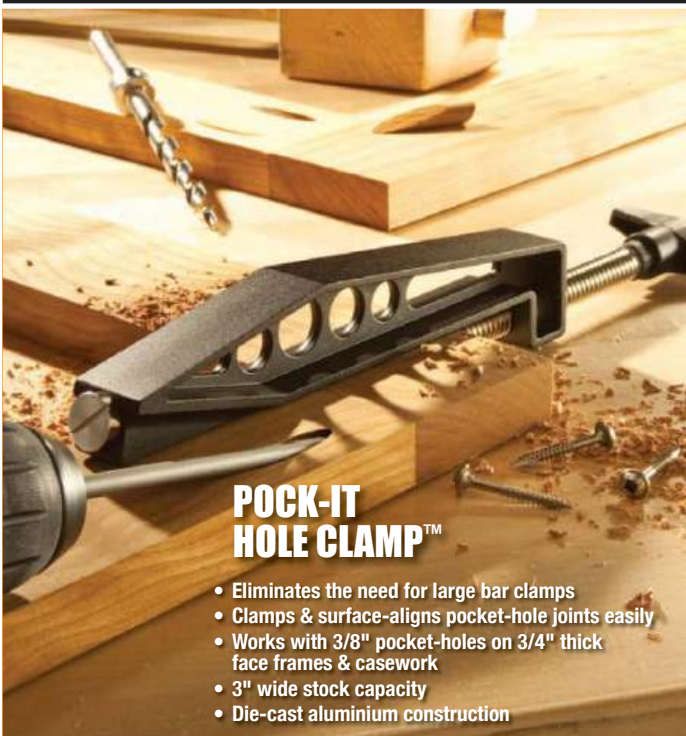


21

Conclusion

Hopefully these tips will enable you to refine the bowls you are beginning to make and provide you with more enjoyment and less frustration. As your skills improve, you may well find your own, even better, approaches to the process, but in the meantime, success through a simple process can do wonders for your confidence and allow you to progress rather than give up ●

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The author demonstrating the making of barley-twist candlesticks on the great wheel lathe at the 2007 18th-century Woodworking Conference at Colonial Williamsburg



Woodturning magazine 25 years later

Ernie Conover looks back at developments in woodturning equipment over the last 25 years



Ernie Conover

Ernie Conover is best known for teaching and writing about woodturning, as well as designing and marketing the Conover lathe.

Having been the North American correspondent for *Woodturning* magazine in its first years, I was delighted when Mark Baker asked me to write an article for its 25th anniversary. The best thing about being a correspondent in those early days was working for founding Editor, Bernard Cooper, who became a great friend. Everything was by snail mail or fax a quarter of a century ago. Although the latter provided a light speed jump in edit time, I must admit that we squandered many international minutes purely as pen pals. We had similar likes, dislikes and senses of humour and wrote about all the things that two friends write about. Bernard did, and still does, handwrite all correspondence in copperplate calligraphy. With the five-hour lag between Lewes and Eastern Time in the USA, I would wake up

to one of Bernard's chatty letters in my fax tray. His writing is so beautiful that for years I saved his faxes in a rather thick file; sadly the thermal paper was ephemeral, so now they are only in my memory of those halcyon days. With email, IM and Facebook it seems impossible now that anyone would handwrite missives!

In the same way woodturning has changed. We have enjoyed dramatic improvements in the equipment and seen a shift from woodturning being a craft to a vehicle of artistic expression. However, I still consider myself a craftsman and call my workspace a workshop, refusing to call it a studio. Craft and art are yin and yang. Good craft is necessary to create good art and the best craft without art will still be ugly in the morning. You have to have good craft, mastering the medium to produce good art.

Changes in lathe technology



My father and I had gotten into this turning groundswell in the 1970s by introducing our lathe, which revived the idea of a user supplied wood bed. Such hardware sets were advertised in hobbyist's magazines when I was a boy. Our lathe was of solid cast iron with a 405mm swing and an unlimited between centre capacity. The 38-3.175mm TPI, No. MT spindle was set in Timken® Roller Bearings just like our South Bend Metalworking Lathe – America's answer to Myford's ML-7



Myford's last wood lathe, the Mystro, was not made nearly as well as the ML-8, but had modern capacities



Left to right: brothers Roger and Brian Latimer in 1991 at the US Launch of the DVR at the Woodcraft Supply Vendor's Trade Show in Charleston, West Virginia



Powermatic wood lathe

In 1990 a Myford ML-8, a Record Coronet, or here in North America, a Delta, typified an amateur's lathe. In shop jargon they were 'bench lathes' – today called mini lathes – designed to sit on a bench of the owner's making. The magnificently made Myford ML-8 only had a 100mm centre height and a 1in x 12 TPI spindle with a No.1 MT but could be fitted with an outboard turning strut. A great spindle lathe, its faceplate capacity was limited. Myford's last wood lathe was the Mystro, which was not made nearly as well but sported much better capacities.

The Coronet was also a very well made lathe with slightly better capacities than the ML-8 but only a ¾in diameter spindle. The

Delta lathe was the most common lathe in North America but only had a 1in x 8 TPI spindle and 150mm centre height. Many had a gap bed, which was a U-shaped space just under the spindle nose that was only of use to pattern makers who still were major buyers.

Typical enthusiast's output from such lathes was furniture spindles, treenware, chess pieces and small bowls. Faceplate output was typically from dry wood, often glued up. A 305mm diameter by 100mm deep bowl was the theoretical limit.

Starting in the 1970s, great changes had been brewing in woodturning. Faceplate work was evolving from dry wood to green wood of proportions that went beyond the limits of most lathes. A 25mm or smaller

spindle was not up to this work. The stiffness of a spindle goes up by the fourth power of the diameter so jumping to 32mm or 38mm makes a huge difference. About the only lathes that could handle this new breed of faceplate work was the Union Graduate or an Oliver. The Graduate sported a 1½in x 6 TPI, No.3MT spindle and a capacity of 460mm diameter by 305mm deep. The Oliver Corporation was all but bankrupt and the few machines they were still building were very expensive.

In 1991 Oneway Manufacturing of Ontario, Canada introduced their groundbreaking 2436 Woodturning Lathe. Tim Clay broke traditional lathe design rules in the process. Machine vibration is directly



proportional to the stiffness of the material it is made from and inversely proportional to mass. Cast iron meets both of these ends by being very heavy yet somewhat flexible. Clay used structural steel combined with carefully placed weld joints to cancel vibration. A weld joint acts like a crack in a wine glass, cancelling its ability to ring. The Oneway also had excellent speed control, a M33 × 3.5 spindle and patented banjo that locks with minimal effort to the bed and the toolrest like they were welded in place. Welded design is increasingly seen on high-end lathes because small or even custom production can be done economically.

In 1996 Powermatic collaborated with my dear friend and mentor, Rude Osolnik, in

creating the 3520. It was largely based on the Oliver 159, which had been Rude's favourite lathe. Made in Asia, it did not skimp on the cast iron. In 1995 Barry Schwaiger, John Arne and I redesigned the 3520, further improving Rude's vision to better conform to today's turning needs which ended up as the 3520b.

At the cost of local production, Taiwanese and mainland China manufacturing has contributed to getting us cheaper lathes with larger capacity. While Chinese manufacturing could be a bit dodgy in 1990 it has come up to world standards 25 years later. As a former domestic manufacturer I lament this but an immutable law of economics is: goods and services will find the lowest cost of production. We have better

lathes today at cheaper prices.

The lathes I mentioned at the beginning of this article all had a stepped set of sheaves, which required joggling the V-belt. More expensive lathes enjoyed a Reeves Drive, which employed a variable width sheave controlled by a handle on the headstock. This made for infinite speed control, but a Reeves Drive required frequent belt replacement or annoying vibration would set in.

Solid-state electronics has allowed lathe designers to add variable speed to any lathe. When we launched the Conover Lathe in the 1970s we decided on DC Power for speed control because cycle rate speed controllers were still too expensive. KB Electronics made a superb DC power supply which we coupled with a motor custom wound by Met in Minnesota. We also went to poly-V rather than standard V-belts. The latter is prone to surging due to the belt hunkering down in the groove during power demands, then slingshotting high as the motor produces the power. The automotive industry had been using poly-V belts for years because they have the positive drive of a V-belt with the smooth power transmission of a flat belt. Most lathes use poly-V belts today.

In 1991 Tim Clay decided to control the speed of his Oneway Lathe with an Emerson AC Drive Control which takes normal single phase AC current at 60 cycles (Hz) – 50Hz in the UK – and delivers three-phase current at a cycle rate between 2Hz and 70Hz. Since cycle rate controls the speed of an induction motor, this allows a 1725 motor to run anywhere between 57 and 2,800rpm with minimal drop in torque at the low end. The price of cycle rate speed control has dropped so much that today it is used on most lathes of ½HP or more and has completely replaced DC.

Another great speed control is proprietary to Teknatool International of Auckland, New Zealand, the makers of Nova Lathes. At an engineering conference Roger Latimer, a principal of the company, met a Russian engineer working for a company that made the control motors for MiG fighter jets. Set adrift by glasnost, the engineer was looking for industrial applications for their reluctance motors. This led to the Nova DVR which delivers full 2.3 HP at the spindle at any speed from 100 to 2,500rpm. I was an advisor to Teknatool, helping in the refinement of the machine as well as the 2001 launch of the DVR in North America.

Developments in chucking

A similar quantum leap has taken place in chucking. A well-stocked 1990 turning shop would sport drive and live centres, faceplates, a screw chuck, a spigot – collet – chuck and possibly a four-jaw engineer's chuck.



65 balusters and 10 newel posts turned by Ernie

Metalworking chucks are designed to grip metal and have an entirely different jaw profile from the wood holding chucks we enjoy today. An engineer's chuck often left a woodturner wondering if a great white shark had attacked his work.

The first really great four-jaw chuck designed for woodturning was the Nova Lever Chuck introduced in the late 1980s.

I tried one that Rude Osolnik brought back from New Zealand and promptly ordered one. Oneway based their lever chuck on the Nova design but also introduced their excellent gear driven Stronghold and Talon chucks. Nova then offered gear chucks and other makers such as Vicmarc and Robert Sorby jumped on the bandwagon offering great chucks. There are also a host of

Chinese made examples of varying quality.

High Speed Tools

High Speed Tools (HSS) were completely replacing carbon steel in 1990 to the point that it is hard to buy the latter today. Jerry Glaser was the first to introduce powdered metal technology steel in his tools. Powder



Bedroom in Late Georgian Style. Interior joinery, Sheridan bed, Shaker nightstands and chests crafted by author. Susan Conover wove the coverlet



Photo for the 2007 Walter Meier Annual Report, which featured Powermatic, which was one of the many companies they owned

BOOKS BY ERNIE CONOVER

The Lathe Book, 1st Edition

Taunton Press, 1993

Complete guide to buying, maintaining and using a woodturning lathe

The Router Table Book

Taunton Press, 1994

How to build or buy a router table and safely use it

Tables You Can Customize

F & W Publications, 1995

Building guide for a variety of tables and how the maker can modify the table to the style of his or her choice

Turning for Furniture

Taunton Press, 1996

How to turn any furniture part from knobs and legs to bed posts

Turn a Bowl with Ernie Conover

Taunton Press, 2000

How to turn bowls and spin pewter on a wood lathe

The Lathe Book, 2nd Edition

Taunton Press, 2001

Complete guide to buying, maintaining and using a woodturning lathe

The Woodworker's Guide to Dovetails

Fox Chapel, 2009

How to make this essential joint by hand or by machine

The Frugal Woodturner

Fox Chapel, 2010

How to make and modify all the tools and equipment you need for woodturning



A wheel I made for my wife, of mostly curly cherry with white oak for the wheel rim

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technology allows steelmakers to alloy up to 15% vanadium instead of the mere 2% possible by conventional methods. I think the long edge holding claims are real for metalworking but don't make a great difference in woodcutting. I find powdered metal to be gummy and difficult to bring to a keen edge. HSS tools are cheaper, easier to bring to a keen edge, hold that edge well; the emperor has no clothes...

Carbide inserted tools hit the marketplace at the beginning of this century selling like hotcakes due to demonstration at every woodworking show in North America. This created the factoid that they were better than conventional tools. This is not so; they will allow a beginner to get acceptable results without catches but the shapes will be that of the tools with smoothness that is not nearly as good as conventional tools properly sharpened and correctly applied. The emperor has no clothes...

Sharpening systems

I think the biggest factor in getting more people comfortable with turning was sharpening jigs. In 1990 we sharpened our tools by balancing them on a 6mm steel bar and rolling them against the grinding wheel. The process was the reverse of turning itself so I have always maintained that tool grinding was turning's evil twin. Jigs have brought sharpening within anybody's reach.

Tim Clay brought out his Wolverine Sharpening System and Vari-grind jig in the early 1990s. Based on Jerry Glaser's jig it has become the lingua franca of turning tool sharpening. A recent improvement on the Vari-grind jig, vis-à-vis bowl gouge sharpening, is Johannes Michelsen's triple grind Vector jig. It marries perfectly into the Wolverine System facilitating primary, secondary and tertiary grinds. The triple grind is the cat's meow for inside faceplate work. While I first thought it only suitable for experienced turners I now introduce it on hour three of a faceplate class.

As to the actual grinding of tools the biggest game changer for me is Cubic Boron Nitride (CBN) Wheels. Perfectly concentric they cut cool, making precise grinding so, so lovely. Expensive but worth every penny they cost.

Woodturning today

In these 25 years I have written eight books and countless magazine articles and taught hundreds of people to turn. Turning has progressed from light duty bench lathes with Lilliputian output to a full spectrum of machines from mini to large lathes with gargantuan capacities. It has metamorphosed to a turnkey industry from a loosely networked group of basement denizens that

purchased a basic, often second-hand lathe, then scrounged and cobbled out the rest of their kit. *Woodturning* magazine was a giant step in networking these turners. I am saddened by the gentrification of the craft for I think turnkey solutions often deaden skill. No matter the advertising claims, a four-jaw chuck will not solve your holding problems if you do not know how to use faceplates and centres. If you cannot grind a scraper from an old bit of metal, how can you sharpen a purchased one? Yes, I find gentrification sad but then I walked five miles to school each day; it was uphill both ways! I see the major challenge for today's turner to be the craftsman/artist's control

of the medium. Turnkey solutions – which abound – are fine if you can turn well with a faceplate and set of centres. Turnkey gets people turning fast but without any understanding of wood movement, the importance of not having a complete annular ring in a billet, the correct grain orientation for strong gluing and the list goes on. I think craft education today seems to start at intermediate level without ever talking about the basics. In my teaching I spoon feed the basics slowly while teaching what is billed as an intermediate class. It is amazing how many so-called professional woodworkers today are ignorant of what a true face and a true edge are! ●



325mm fluted bowl from ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)



50mm persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) turned



Interpretation of a classic Shaker rocking chair, built at the Canterbury Community

As you can see from the accompanying photo, when it comes to celebrating the festive season we here at the ToolPost really know no shame! But then what's wrong with having a bit of fun and showing the world that you are no too proud to take a joke - and can even make yourselves the butt of one! How do we look? Be kind!

Long after the indigestion has succumbed to the patent remedies, when the wrapping has been binned or burned, the Xmas tree chopped up and the kids safely back at school, the warm glow of satisfaction resulting from the receipt of a well-chosen, quality gift from The ToolPost will remain. May we make a few suggestions?

All competent turners would agree that sharp tools are the very essence of good turning. At The ToolPost you'll find a host of equipment designed to give you an excellent edge on all your tools, with the minimum of effort and with perfect repeatability. Whether it is a Wolverine jig from Oneway, a Pro-Edge system from Sorby, a bench grinder or a Tormek system, we can supply.

Danger lurks in every woodturner's workshop because our activities lead us to create dust. Happily there is effective protection at hand in the form of a powered respirator. We offer the JSP PowerCap at a subsidised price to encourage more woodturners to take care of their long-term health. Simply put, this is the cheapest life insurance you'll even find - and it pays out to you!

Drawing on their experience as precision engineers, the family business that is Carter & Son Toolworks have created a collection turning tools that would make the most hardened professional drool. Made from M42 high speed steel, these tools hold a supersharp edge like no other. If you only buy one tool this year, make it one of these. If Santa is very caring, (s)he'll buy you a sackful.

If you turn on a smaller lathe, with a swing up to about a foot in diameter, then you'd undoubtedly enjoy turning a whole lot more if you were using tools designed specifically for use on lathes of this size. We thought it so important that we arranged for Hamlet to make the CompAcc tools to our specification. We reckon you'll call them the best tools you ever used on a small lathe!

New wood finishing products are introduced frequently but none of our favourite methods is wood buffing. This quick and easy method of finishing not only imparts a controllable sheen to the surface but also gives a superb tactile finish. We offer a choice of systems from Beall, the originators of the method, from Chestnut and from Oneway.

& if you are not attracted by the thought of buffing your precious wooden artifacts, then you might prefer to use one of the new generation of toy-safe, quick-drying, colourless oil finishes such as Steinert Drechsleröl or D & M Natural Oil Finish. Both are made from entirely natural ingredients and produce a hard wearing surface with a pleasing soft glow, enhancing the timber colour.

The idea of being able to use jawsets from different manufacturers on a single chuck body was originated by The ToolPost with the introduction of The Versachuck. The Versachuck still offers that capability and combines it with a wide range of backplates to suit various spindles and a very attractive pricing structure. Now that really would start off your New Year with a bang.

Hamlet are the producers of the specialist tool sets that bear our own name. We choose them because of their balance of quality and value. But if it's turning tools that you're after, we stock a huge range from the British majors - Hamlet, Henry Taylor, Robert Sorby and Crown as well as a range from renowned toolmakers around the world such as Hunter, Carter, Rolly Munro, Wiedemann, Kelton, Serious Toolworks, Oneway and our own BCT Tools.

Each generation of new products holds promise of performing tasks better and faster. Our O'Donnell ruby and blue ceramic grinding wheels, long the choice of the cognoscenti, are proof of that. Perhaps the current star of the world of sharpening media is CBN - Cubic Boron Nitride. We continue to develop the range of both sizes and grades of CBN wheels we offer - sixteen currently and more to come. We even offer a unique CBN grinding point for sharpening cutters for tools such as the Hamlet Brother series and similar tools.

Long spindle work can be a real problem to turn as it whips around. A simple solution is to use a spindle steady to restrain it and we have a choice of products on the shelf to deal with the situation. The same issues can effect bowl turners when large, thin-walled bowls flex at the rim. Help is available for this issue too with the Oneway Bowl Steady.

Allowing a drill or router to be mounted and plunged in relation to the workpiece opens up new project possibilities. This control is possible by using the Oneway Drill Wizard. Now you can make good use of your lathe's indexing capabilities. Inlaid bowls, clock faces, stool seats, ring trees, cupholders and so many more projects will become a breeze - an opportunity expanding to match your imagination.

Maybe the New Year brings new sartorial style - or is it time to refresh the Santa theme? We can help with our smart and practical new ProDesign smocks embodying everything we always wanted in a turning smock - and they're very affordable too! Or perhaps a T-shirt from Carter or our ToolPost Busy Bodger?

Praise be if you've managed to stay with it this far. How about a reward for your perseverance? If you recognise the cavern location in our Aladdin scene, above, then either write to the address below or email your name and address to aladdin@toolpost.co.uk, with your answer (the exact location, not just the city, or country!). The sender of the first correct answer pulled from our hat after the closing date of midnight on 24th December will be invited to nominate the registered charity of their choice to receive a £100 cheque, in their name, with our compliments.



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PHOTOGRAPHS BY KURT HERTZOG

Fast and easy finishes

Kurt Hertzog explores a few of the fast and easy finishes he uses on his turnings

KURT HERTZOG



Kurt is a professional woodturner, demonstrator and teacher and writes for various woodturning and woodworking publications in the United States as well as writing for *Woodturning* magazine. He is on the Pen Makers' Guild Council and is currently president of the American Association of Woodturners (AAW).

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Most woodturners fall into the immediate gratification category of woodworkers. Rather than spending many days or weeks on any project, they tend towards completion rather quickly in the hour(s) or single day realm. For the large majority of turners that are in the short time frame scenario, their desired finishing technique needs to be a fast and easy process as well. There are many fast and easy finishes available, both commercial and homemade. As the process becomes fast and easy, often there are some other sacrifices that must be

made for the sake of speed. A quick and easy finish may not have the durability, toughness, repairability, water repellency, depth of sheen, or other characteristics that might be desired. These needs are something that should always be considered when selecting a finishing process and material. When speed and simplicity of process are more important to you than the other attributes, then knowledge of the trade-offs has already been made and accepted. This month, I'd like to explore just a couple of the fast and easy finishes that I use.

Safety

Most of our discussion this month focuses on relatively common and benign materials. Regardless, be aware that any and all chemicals should be treated with respect and proper PPE. Safety glasses, hand protection, proper ventilation, breathing protection when needed and any other recommended safety equipment and procedures should be adhered to for your wellbeing. Also, be aware that something that you are tolerant to may be extremely hazardous to others.

In particular, I am speaking of the nut-derived oils. For the friction polish application and burnishing, use only the paper towel-type products instead of cloth. Paper products will work as well as cloth but provide a tear away action if there are catches. This is far less hazardous than cloth in these types of workshop use. Be aware that regulations for food-safe finishes vary around the world. Be certain that you know, understand and comply with them as appropriate if your turning's end use falls into categories covered by them.

Walnut oil – as simple as it comes

When I think of finishes and their application to a turning, I can't think of anything that gets much simpler than an oil that can be applied to the surface and let soak in. Most simple, pressed-only oils share some common failings. Unless they have been processed into a special concoction creating a hardening finish that builds, they don't harden and they don't provide much in the



way of protection. Soaking into the wood will usually punch up the colour and might provide a bit of liquid repellency. Not many of the simple, pressed oils harden but one that does is walnut oil. Barring a recipient who has an allergy to nuts, you can use this food product as a finish on nearly anything. Purchased in your grocery store, this salad dressing and seasoning agent might be above reproach when considering food safety. The food connoisseur may know the difference between the cold pressed and refined walnut oils for their taste differences. The cold pressed retains more of the nutrients and flavour. For our purposes, the less expensive refined walnut oil will do very nicely. Quite



Walnut oil is available in the salad dressing aisle of the larger grocers. A selection of brands and extraction methods is available

pricey in either form, walnut oil can be used straight from the bottle as a single component. It can also be used as a mixture with beeswax. This one-third oil, two-thirds beeswax melt is often used by woodworkers on cutting boards and wooden utensils. It can be used as well by turners on bowls or other items. Using walnut oil right out of the bottle, apply sufficient oil allowing it to wick into the turning. You can use a traditional brush, foam pad or paper towel. When it appears to have dried, apply additional coats if desired using the same process. Any excess can be wiped away as needed. Allowed to air dry, walnut oil will indeed harden. As noted, don't expect a protective build as you might with a varnish but the wood itself will take on a lustre and can be buffed to your desired gloss. I include walnut oil here and currently exclude the many other pressed oils available. Most of those require advanced added



Used straight from the bottle, it can simply be applied by cloth, brush, foam applicator or by fingertips if you wish

chemistry making them far more than just an oil. Future articles will delve further into finishing options.



Applied liberally from the outside, it will wick into the wood and usually show up on the inside surface



I don't usually count on an even coat on the inside from wicking alone. I apply coats to the inside in the same manner as outside



A single coat applied to the inside and out of this natural edge bowl. Dry to the touch in 15 minutes

Friction polishes

Virtually every woodturning supplier has a friction polish product offering that allows the turner to rub on the finish and then burnish it to final gloss. The ones I have used in the past and certainly not all available are U-Beaut Shella-wax and Mylands friction polish. Both of these go on quick and easy. I've heard the term 'speed and ease', which I believe refers to the same type of product. Not knowing the exact chemical compounding of the many available friction finish products, my guess is that they contain shellac, wax, solvent and perhaps each manufacturer's magic additives they believe enhance the process or results. I use the commercial versions as well as a homemade version. The formula I use for the homemade mixture is equal parts of shellac, denatured alcohol and boiled linseed oil. Homemade liquid friction polishes, like

the store bought, will settle out so vigorous shaking to mix all of the components is needed prior to use. Applied directly or on a paper towel, the lathe is run fast yet safe while pressing your application towel firmly to generate heat. After application and the high speed friction burnishing, your turning is left with a high gloss shellac finish. Shellac is a wonderful looking finish but for all of the beauty it doesn't provide exceptional protection. Items that will receive a lot of handling, contact liquids, or live a tougher life than sitting on the shelf for viewing usually require something providing more build and mechanical and abrasion protection. For the beautiful, rarely handled, display only turnings, friction polish is indeed speedy and easy. The advice that I can offer is that the polish should be used sparingly. Most problems occur when using far too much.



Your woodturning retailer will usually have a wide selection of quick finishes available. Many are friction while others are oils or waxes

Put on a small amount and burnish it in. Add more as needed rather than starting with far too much and never effectively burnishing it in. The sticky mess and streaking that can occur is dreadful to try to resolve. Friction polish is best used in smaller piece applications. When applied to larger pieces, it is very difficult to apply and burnish into a continuous coverage. For larger pieces, I favour liquid shellac as below.

Shellac – the real deal

Shellac is a very easy finish to apply. I believe it is one of the most under used and underrated. I'm not speaking of the friction style shellac products but the shellac flakes dissolved in an alcohol solvent. It has been long used by furniture makers for the beauty, ease of application and repairability. Throughout history, shellac has been used based on the availability. The more modern chemical concoctions weren't available. Depending on your needs, shellac may be a finish you should add to your capabilities. As noted above, it does provide limited mechanical and fluid protection but for little handled pieces it provides a beautiful finish that can be very easily applied. There is a cult following among some of the shellac users with everything from the selection of flakes to the solvent to their secret application techniques. I am far from the cult group being a 'buy as mixed' product person or the mix my own but very simply and easily. As long as it is fresh, it works extremely well.

Without getting too far into the shellac foundations, it is simply a bug excretion that is harvested from the trees in India and the subcontinent region. When processed, it is delivered to the end user as a flake that needs to be dissolved. It is also available manufactured and delivered in a can ready for use. The shellac flake is soluble in a variety of alkaline solutions as well as organic solvents. Most commonly, it is dissolved in denatured alcohol. If you buy the shellac in a can, you'll need to be aware of the manufacturing date since shellac does have an effective shelf life once mixed. If you mix your own, the solvent of choice is usually denatured alcohol based on cost and availability. If the shellac flakes have been stored properly, they have a very extended lifetime. Either way, once dissolved in the alcohol solvent the clock begins to run on the effective use life. Bulls Eye is essentially the only supplier in the US, but there are numerous other companies around the world, indicates that their products have a three year life from date of manufacture. Buying in the appropriate quantities to keep your stock within this timeframe is a wise idea since once the product goes over the edge, there really isn't a fix for it that I know of. Once it has degraded based on age, it simply won't harden properly once the alcohol flashes off.



A host of quick finishes available at your retailer. Here are three friction finishes and a water-based quick finish

If used after this time-based degradation, it cures to a soft finish often being somewhat sticky. Mixing your own shellac is very easily done and ensures that your product is fresh. You can mix what you need for your immediate needs with little or no wastage knowing that it is fresh and effective. It is wise to only mix what you'll use promptly and mark the date and mix on the container.

Using shellac is as easy as wiping it on. Your applicator can be a cloth, brush, foam or spray. Be certain your foam products are usable with alcohol or use them quickly before degradation. You can apply shellac with your lathe running but I often use the lathe as a workholding device. My typical application is by brush while rotating the lathe by hand as needed as applied. Once the application has been completed, I will turn the lathe on a very slow speed while the shellac cures. I do this to minimise any sags or drips if the shellac was applied generously. Properly applied in light coats, shellac will cure very quickly allowing for many repeated

applications during the same day. The hard shellac that once was stuck to a tree is now stuck to your turning. The alcohol simply flashes off and the process is done. Because the subsequent applications are laden with solvent, the added coats just melt into the previous coats allowing for a build of shellac without any intermediate operations. The resulting cured finish can be waxed or buffed for a higher sheen. It can also be steel woolled back for any desired matte finish. The fact that the curing process is reversible with the application of alcohol allows for easy repair now or many years down the road. Conservators worldwide use this fact letting them repair finishes as needed for antiquities in their care.

There are a few terminology and various mixing option things you should know about shellac. Whether you mix your own or buy it already mixed, you'll hear the term 'X' pound cut. 'X' is the number of pounds of flakes that were dissolved in a gallon of solvent. You'll usually run into a one, two or three pound cut



Shellac flakes are available in a variety of processed levels including waxed, dewaxed and different colour tints

although fractional cuts are often made and used as 'spit' coats. When purchasing pre-made shellac finishes, the manufacturer rarely spells out the actual cut instead preferring to give it a name. For the Bulls Eye products, their Sealcoat is about a two-pound cut and their shellac, whether amber or clear, is about a three-pound cut – this is similar for other brands around the world. Since nobody I know mixes a gallon or more at a time, some simple maths for smaller volumes

will allow for mixing your own or diluting pre-made shellac to the desired cut. In practice, a two-pound cut makes a wonderful sanding sealer or a primer coat for subsequent finishes. The beauty of shellac is that you can use virtually any other finish directly over the top. It will accept oils, varnishes, lacquers and more.

Shellac can also be used as a barrier coat when that is needed. My standard use right from the pre-made cans is the

two-pound cut Sealcoat when I plan on shooting lacquer over the top. I use the three-pound cut Shellac as a finish completely by itself. I personally have never used shellac from a spray gun but it is widely done by many finishers. As with any sprayed material, the dilution is needed based on your equipment and process. If you are in this mode of application, you'll know how to alter your material and measure it with your viscosity cup.



If you've never seen flakes up close, they are dry to the touch and fractured in different sizes and shapes



Bulls Eye branded Zinsser shellac products dominate the pre-made shellac products available in the US



First coat of shellac applied generously by foam brush from a three pound cut of Zinsser Bulls Eye Clear



I usually spin the wet coats in the lathe to prevent any drips or sags that can occur with heavier applied coats



One pound to one gallon or proportional fractions thereof yields a 1# cut. Heavier cuts, i.e. 2# or 3#, use the added pounds of shellac to a gallon



A homemade finish that uses shellac with melted beeswax is created in a double boiler and used as a bowl finish



Some of my applications for shellac. Left – shellac matted back with steel wool; centre – shellac alone; right – shellac undercoat for lacquer top coat

Toning with shellac

One of the very underutilised capabilities of shellac is the ability to tint the shellac and perform a process commonly known as ‘toning’. Shellac, whether factory made or your own blend, uses alcohol as a solvent. That allows you to mix in any dye that is alcohol soluble. There is a vast array of these available in the market place with many of the brands being well known for their light fastness. The beauty of these products is that the colour and intensity of the toning is completely in your hands. You can take a small amount of shellac and mix in the dye(s) of your choice to create any colour palette you wish. The dye colours can be mixed and matched as needed without problem letting you create a final product specific to your needs. If you record the shellac cut and volume along with the dye information and number of drops used, you’ll have a repeatable blend for creation of the next batch you might need. It is an interesting process with the dye particles carried into the wood fibres to remain there with the flashing off of the alcohol and the shellac being largely deposited and remaining on the surface at the curing completion.



The colour options for mixing alcohol soluble dyes into shellac are endless. Mix and match colours and intensity to effect toning



A simple application of shellac alone makes a wonderful finish providing reasonable protection while punching up the figure

Conclusions

Finishing can be a fine art that is rarely practised by the woodturning community. In the quickly turned, sanded and finished world many of us woodturners live in, the process of finishing is usually as rapid as we can get away with. While a woodworker or instrument maker may spend days or weeks on a finishing process, most of ours is often measured in minutes or in some rare occasions in hours. When you select a finish, it is a balance between cost, time, durability, final appearance,

repairability and ease of application.

I’ve presented a few of my quick and easy finishes ranging from walnut oil straight from the bottle to friction finishes to traditional shellac. Depending on your protection needs, any of these will work quite quickly and with little effort. Spending far more time and space in this column on the traditional shellac wasn’t an accident. My hope is that you’ll see how simple it is and how versatile a finish it can be. It can be a finish alone, a barrier protection between

other finishes that don’t like each other, an undercoat for a different finish, or a toning mechanism. It is so versatile and so easy. If you haven’t tried it yet, I highly recommend you do at your earliest convenience. The track record is impressive and it continues even in a world with many alternatives. Furniture and instrument makers can’t have been wrong for all these centuries. I believe you’ll find a great finish to add to your current finishing repertoire that you may have overlooked. ●

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Sweet chestnut bowl

Bob Chapman looks at sweet chestnut and turns an Art Deco-style bowl

BOB CHAPMAN



After teaching chemistry for many years, Bob took early retirement to become a professional woodturner, and is a member of the Register of Professional Turners. He was a

demonstrator at the 2009 AWGB Woodturning Seminar and is available for commissions.

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Sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) trees, also called Spanish chestnuts, are thought to have been introduced to Britain by the Romans, probably to provide a source of food. Although rather bitter when raw, the nuts become sweet and floury when cooked and are used in all sorts of puddings and desserts. Roman soldiers were fed on a boiled sweet chestnut mash they called 'polenta' – a variant of the boiled maize meal we now know under the same name. Even today culinary uses still constitute the major commercial reason for the cultivation of the trees and globally the demand for the nuts exceeds supply.

There is an avenue of huge pollarded chestnut trees at Croft Castle in Herefordshire, said to originate from nuts taken from the wrecks of the Spanish Armada, which attacked England in 1588. Legend has it that the trees are planted in positions representing the deployment of the Spanish fleet. If they were planted at the time of the Armada, it would make these magnificent trees well over 400 years old now, and their sheer size and hoary appearance do nothing to deny such a possibility. There is an atmosphere of perpetual stillness and tranquillity clinging to them.

Sweet chestnuts are large trees and may grow trunks as much as 2 metres in diameter – see example opposite – with deeply grooved and often spiralled bark. The timber has a high tannin content, which increases its durability and makes it suitable for fence posts and other exterior woodwork. Tannin extracted from chestnut bark and timber was once used in the production of leather. Chestnut is an attractive timber and more recently it has found small-scale use for furniture and as a constructional timber. It is sometimes used as a substitute for oak (*Quercus robur*), which it resembles in appearance, although it is weaker, softer and more easily worked. It is an excellent timber for turning.



Sweet chestnuts have a variety of culinary uses



The Spanish Chestnut avenue at Croft Castle, Herefordshire



The chestnut trees at Croft Castle may be over 400 years old

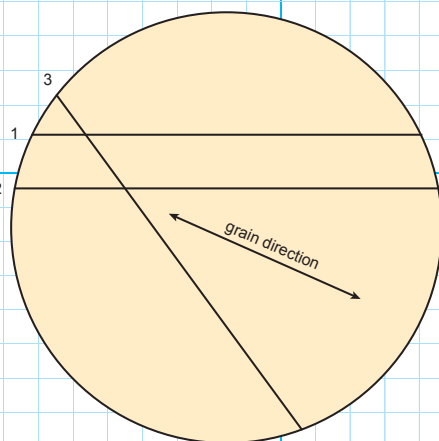
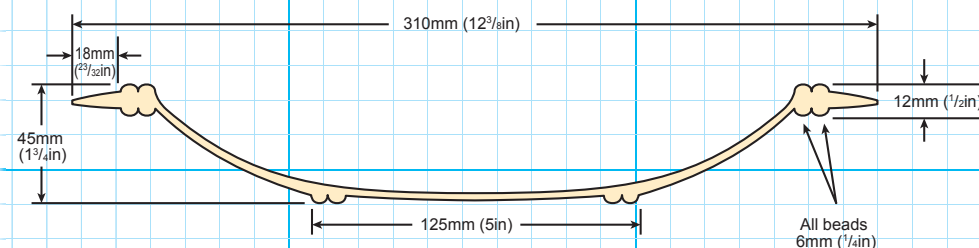


Chestnut tree trunks can grow to 2m in diameter

PLANS & EQUIPMENT

EQUIPMENT USED

3mm parting tool
25mm skew chisel
13mm bowl gouge
6mm bowl gouge
Ashley Iles 6mm bead forming tool
Plane or planer to smooth cut surfaces before gluing
PVA adhesive
Stained sycamore veneer
PPE: facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction



The numbers show the order in which the cuts were made

An 'Art Deco' chestnut bowl

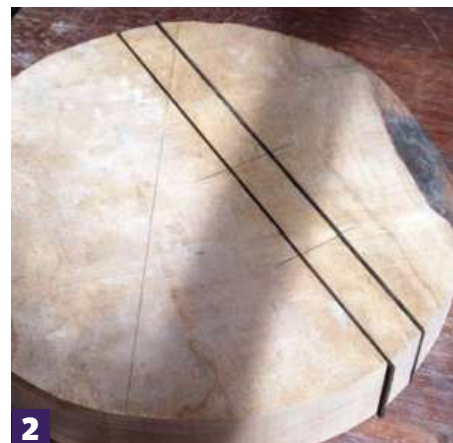
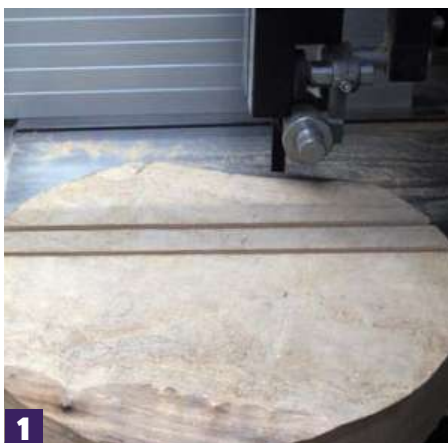
The blank for this project was already cut into a rough circle approximately 320mm in diameter and 50mm thick and, as it was quite bland, with no striking features in the timber, I decided to jazz it up a little by adding some black veneer lines across the bowl to give it something of a geometrical, Art Deco look. My first thought was to have two lines at right angles, one running with the grain and one across the grain, but this would have involved gluing end grain sections together and that never seems like a good idea, so all the cuts were made at a shallow angle to the grain in the hope that this would strengthen the glue joints when the pieces were rejoined. Straight lines may look plain and uninteresting on a flat surface, but if they pass through regions where the surface is curved, then they emphasise the shape and movement of the piece. Obviously any bowl will have curved surfaces, but I decided to add to this by incorporating a series of half-round beads in both the upper and lower surfaces of the bowl.

1 After marking out the cut lines on the blank, cut the first two lines on the bandsaw, then plane the cut surfaces smooth and straight. Cut strips of veneer to a width matching the thickness of the bowl blank

2 Place the pieces loosely together using the third cut line to line them up so that the grain matches across the veneer lines. In this position, make further mating marks across the joints. These make positioning the pieces easier when they are glued up

3 I used Titebond II glue but any good quality PVA type glue will do. Apply glue liberally to the chestnut surfaces before sandwiching the veneer between them and putting the pieces back together. Use plenty of glue to ensure a good bond between the veneer layers and the blocks of solid wood on either side of them

4 Carefully align the mating marks and gently cramp the block, then leave for the glue to set. Take care not to overtighten the cramps as it is very easy to push the pieces out of alignment or to squeeze the glue out resulting in a weak, 'dry', joint. It is important that the block is glued securely. When the glue has set in these two joints, form the third veneer line in the same way, using the newly formed veneer lines to align the piece





5 With the blank mounted on an 8mm screw held in the chuck, clean and mark out the underside. The inner circle represents the spigot size and is determined by the chuck. This remains the same for every bowl I make, whereas the outer circle represents the size of the foot, which is determined by the size of the bowl. I usually make the foot approximately a third of the diameter of the bowl

6 Form the dovetail spigot with a parting tool and skew chisel, removing waste with a 13mm bowl gouge. Cut the beads for the foot using a 6mm bead-forming tool, ensuring that all beads are identical



7 Using a 13mm bowl gouge, shape the underside as far as the rim, which is left quite thick to accommodate the beads that will be formed on the upper surface. After forming the beads on this side of the bowl, refine the bowl shape with sheering cuts from the bowl gouge. Note the angle of the gouge – the flute is well over, at about 8 o'clock, with the lower wing taking a very fine cut at approximately 45°. The fine shavings accumulating on the toolrest show the delicacy of the cut

8 After sanding from 120 to 400 grit, give the bowl's exterior a coat of cellulose sanding sealer before waxing and buffing to a sheen with a soft cloth



9 With the bowl reversed and held by the spigot in the chuck, true up the rim area with the bowl gouge prior to cutting the beads on this side which mark the inner edge of the rim. It is important to the design that when cutting these beads they match exactly the position of the beads on the lower surface of the rim and thus maintain its symmetry. Complete the rim down to the level of the bottom of these beads and sand the beads and the rim down to 400 grit

10 Continue hollowing the bowl, working in towards the centre, but stopping partway to allow a central 'lump' to remain. This helps maintain rigidity in the bowl and prevents the walls from flexing too much as you work on them. Remove wood from the middle only when the walls are nearing completion



HANDY HINTS

1. This blank was already round when I got it, but the cutting and gluing up would have been much easier on a square block. Using clamps on a curved surface is not easy and it is difficult to prevent the glue joints from sliding out of alignment
2. When using glued-up blanks be aware that glue joints may fail without warning, especially as turning proceeds and the glued area decreases making the joint weaker. Ensure tools are kept very sharp

11 Finish the interior of the bowl with light cuts into the middle, maintaining the smooth curvature of the bowl

12 Power sand the interior of the bowl from 120 grit to 400 grit using 75mm sanding pads in an electric drill. These larger pads span any high spots, helping to remove them and level the surface. Seal and polish the interior as before

13 The final step is to reverse the bowl once more on the vacuum chuck and, using a small 10mm bowl gouge with a swept-back grind, remove the spigot and take the bottom down to the level of the bottom of the beads. After sanding, sealing and polishing, this will leave the beads standing proud of the surface for the bowl to sit on

14 The finished bowl should look something like this

15 Of course it doesn't have to be sweet chestnut. This small beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) bowl was made in a very similar way to the chestnut bowl. Again, the veneers were inserted before turning began, but end grain to side grain in the veneer glue joints was unavoidable. In the knowledge that these joints were weak the piece was turned carefully, taking very light cuts with very sharp tools. In order to cut into the corners, a very high speed was used – the faster the corners come round, the more it feels like cutting solid wood ●

HANDY HINTS

3. If you don't have a vacuum chuck, use Cole button jaws, or make a jam chuck from a piece of scrap MDF or similar
4. It doesn't come into this project but it's worth remembering that because it has a high tannin content, chestnut can be 'ebonised' with steel wool and vinegar mixtures, or fumed with ammonia, in the same way that oak can
5. The veneer used in this project was very thick and called 'construction veneer'. A similar effect can be achieved by using two or three layers of thin veneer glued together. Be sure to give adequate time for the glue to cure properly



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Colwin Way in profile

We meet **Colwin Way**, a woodturner based in the small seaside town of Lyme Regis



PHOTOGRAPHS BY COLWIN WAY

Colwin Way started turning in his teenage years when, in 1983, aged 13, he was given the opportunity to undertake work experience. Not fully knowing what he wanted to do, Colwin approached a local woodturner, Geoff Manley, to see if he might be able to do his work experience with him. "I made this decision," Colwin explains "all because I'd really enjoyed turning a table lamp in woodwork class the previous term at school, which, incidentally, my parents still have." Geoff quickly agreed and Colwin was to look forward to three weeks of woodturning, which concreted his addiction for the craft and opened his eyes to what's possible.

First lathe

That same year Geoff and Colwin managed to convince Colwin's parents to spend £150 on a secondhand Myford ML8 lathe and he set up

a workshop in a 6x4ft shed in his backyard.

Colwin finished school in 1985 completely addicted to woodturning, but not even thinking of a career in it. He asked his uncle John – who was the cox of Lyme Regis lifeboat and someone he looked up to as some type of 'superhero' – if he could work for him. As well as being part of the lifeboat crew, John had his own painting and decorating company. His uncle happily agreed and for the next three years Colwin worked with his team. However, his real passion was still woodturning, which took up most of his spare time.

In 1988 Colwin was encouraged by his parents to go back and see Geoff Manley as they could see how keen he was in his all-consuming hobby. Geoff came back to Colwin to offer an apprenticeship which, of course, he jumped at straight away. This was the start of five incredible years for Colwin.

"In fact," he tells us, "the first week was one of the most useful weeks of my career so far."

Experience

During his apprenticeship, Colwin got to experience using all kinds of timbers, from ziricote (*Cordia dodecandra*), partridge wood (*Andira inermis*), snakewood (*Brosimum guianense*), purpleheart (*Peltogyne spp.*), bloodwood (*Pterocarpus angolensis*) and thuya burr (*Tetraclinis articulata*).

After his five-year apprenticeship with Geoff finished, the pair both decided it was time he set up on his own. So in 1993, at the age of 23, in the shed in his parents' backyard with a Tyme Avon lathe that Geoff bought him, Colwin set up his own 'turning' business. However, Colwin and his partner soon wanted a place of their own, which would mean a new workshop, so the next part of his adventure started.

◀ Moving on

The couple moved into a 'quirky' flat which was a converted stable and they heard that a local landowner was looking for a farm manager and someone to help manage the game estate, so Colwin went for the position and started the following week. After a few weeks, he was able to move into the farm workshop and continue his turning business from there. "I loved it!" Colwin tells us, "I looked after the animals, checked the farm and did all my duties then went into the workshop to turn. In my time at the farm I was able to continue my learning and went on several courses including, chainsaw felling, crosscut and maintenance and hedge laying."

Colwin also had the opportunity to plant soft and hardwoods and manage the woodlands around the farm, by nursery cropping with Christmas trees, thinning and controlling the intrusive vegetation, like ivy. He explains: "I worked with a group of travelling 'woodsmen' who lived and worked in the wood. They used heavy horses to selectively take certain trees to minimise damage to the wood, which they then made into charcoal."

Outside of his work on the farm, Colwin was given another opportunity through someone he had taught woodturning to many years previously, at Axminster Tools and Machinery. Colwin was asked to run courses and manage the newly opened woodturning centre at the shop close to their original in Chard Street, in Axminster. "I couldn't believe what I was being asked," he tells us. "This was another dream job!" Of course, he took the job and in 1997 started his long association with Axminster, who he is working for to this day.

Turning style

Colwin looks to his turning style, saying how it changes frequently, depending on his current inspiration: "I think this is due to my training and turning life, as one day could be production turning salad bowls, the next jewellery," he explains. "But also 'teaching' focuses on technique, where style becomes less apparent."

If the woodturner had to come up with one word to describe his style, it would be 'fun' – German nutcrackers, fishing lures and space ships are all pieces he is working on at the moment. He wants to show people there is more to turning than just bowls and lamps – especially the young, who Colwin feels are very quickly bored of turning. So, he is hoping to encourage his young audience to use their imagination.

Colwin also makes a lot of what he would call 'normal' things. These are things that pay the bills, such as stair and chair spindles, fruit, bowls and lamps, but he is always working on the more unusual demonstration pieces. "I consider myself as an entertainer



A selection of turned fishing lures



Single trout lure



Vases in Riviera palm, local palm from Dorset



The painting stage of the German-style nutcrackers



A German-style nutcracker

as well as a teacher trainer," he explains. "So what I make represents this. I still need to sell my work as well as put on a demonstration and talk, entertain and educate people."

Inspiration

"I take a lot of inspiration from the people around me, the place I live and hobbies I have. My wife and two sons inspire my turning greatly, certainly on the fun side, and that was how I started making German-style nutcrackers," he explains. Colwin was encouraged by his son to make a 'soldier nutcracker' for his teacher one Christmas, just after he had created a batch of Christmas tree decorations for his friends.

Colwin has plenty of time to think and find inspiration, thanks to his other hobbies. He tells us: "My hobbies of cycling, surfing and fishing continually give me 'time' to think! Anyone who's done any of these will understand what I mean when I say you have an almost meditational moment of peace, where creative thoughts flourish!" Living in Lyme Regis – in the heart of the 'Jurassic Coast' – Colwin is in a place of constant inspiration. He finds it through its geology, with the mixture of sea and countryside and its dramatic views. Just a walk along the beach can give Colwin hundreds of moments of inspiration.

Influence

"My greatest influence in woodturning has been Geoff Manley," he tells us. "He shaped me into the turner I am and gave me so many projects in so many different materials and would not let me make excuses." He tells us that Geoff had complete faith in Colwin's ability and encouraged him to try everything.

"I have lots of turning friends but two in particular are a constant part of my life," he says. "Jason Breach, who many will know from the wonderful boxes he turns, demonstrates around the world but I've known him from the start. We first met when I was an apprentice with Geoff all those years ago. Our turning lives ran parallel right up to this day as we work together at the Axminster workshops." Colwin and Jason are constantly looking at improving their teaching and Jason is a constant source of encouragement and an honest critic for Colwin, saying: "I can always count on Jason for support."

Nick Agar is another long-term friend and even though Colwin doesn't get to see him too often, the pair catch up often over the phone: "Nick has a very supportive nature and, like Jason, is incredibly encouraging. Nick has done my turning career wonders. He's gone out of his way to put me in the spotlight and put my name forward as a demonstrator turner but more than this, he's become a close personal friend and adviser to myself and family."

Workshop

Colwin describes his workshop as: “more of a ‘den’, really”. It holds the things that he uses continually, such as his lathe, tools, bikes and fishing gear. “On the one hand,” he says, “it is set up to generate income; on the other, it’s a bit of a man cave and like any den, is bursting at the seams!”

We asked him what tool he could not do without, to which he says: “I would really struggle without my skew chisels – I have about five of them. Most important, is a 10mm tapered carbon steel skew, which I’ve had since my apprenticeship. This tool just feels right to me, as if it was made for me.”

Typical day

Colwin feels very lucky with what his work days consists of, saying: “I don’t have a typical day but some of the more common days could consist of entertaining a visiting woodturning club and giving them the Axminster experience.” He could also include teaching a course in his work day, which could be anything from a group of complete beginners taking their first woodturning steps to a group of students making a Windsor chair each, as well as demonstrating in store or privately for a woodturning club. Colwin will also regularly undertake wood preparation for demonstrations or courses – this could consist of a day in the cutting room or a visit to the timber yard.

Highs and lows

“It’s difficult to say about my highs and lows,” Colwin tells us about his career. “I get many highs when people finish a course – I love the look on their faces, as cheesy as it sounds!” He also mentions a great feeling when at the end of a demo, people have liked what they’ve seen, or when someone says ‘you were the reason I started turning’. All of these things make him feel like he’s having an impact and making a difference.

A continual and personal high for Colwin also comes from being asked to demonstrate.

Lows are much easier to identify, as he comments: “For me, it means having to say ‘goodbye’ to old friends when they pass.”

For Colwin, the best thing about turning is the diversity and not just in projects, but the people. “The fact that it doesn’t matter if you’re rich or poor, young or old, educated or



Colwin adding detail with the paint brush

not,” he says. “You can release your creative thoughts and within an hour you can have produced something.”

Future

Colwin describes himself as very much a family man, which will always have an impact on travelling, but he says: “I’m also very much part of Axminster Tools and Machinery, where many of my close friends are, but I would love to continue travelling and experience turning cultures in other countries with my family.”

He would also like to continue his teaching and give people the confidence to try this wonderful hobby for themselves. ●

A selection of handmade miniature surfboards





Colwin's German nutcrackers in progress

HANDY HINTS

If you're learning to use the skew and planing cuts just aren't going right try putting a small secondary bevel on the edge to calm the chisel down and don't forget to keep that bevel rubbing!

LIKES

- The variety of timbers and materials there are to use
- The people I meet and the places I visit through woodturning
- The smell of olive and thuya
- Rough turning wet timber
- Peeling back the first board when planking a tree

DISLIKES

- Turning Banksia nuts
- Woodworm!
- Bad design
- When people don't persevere with something because it's difficult – e.g skew
- The smell of zebrano



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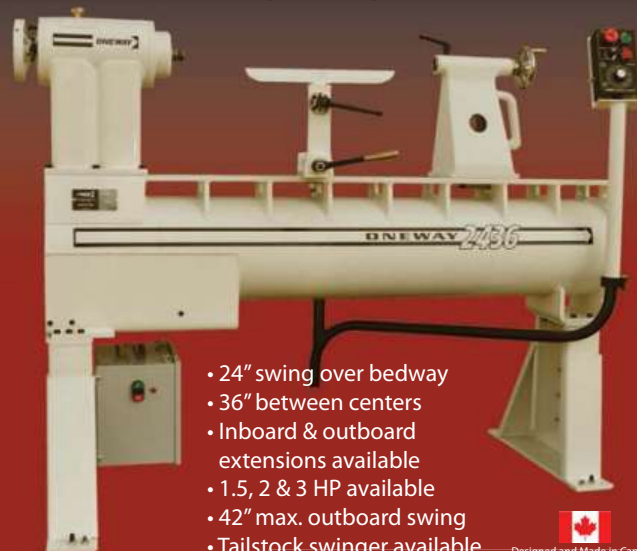
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Crowds gather at the 2015 AWGB International Woodturning Seminar

2015 AWGB International Woodturning Seminar report

Mark Baker reports from the recent biannual AWGB International Woodturning Seminar

The AWGB Seminar occurs every two years and again, this year's was held on Loughborough University campus. It is a much-anticipated event and typically attracts about 200 people. That said, the people involved in organising and coordinating the event takes that number much higher. It has a trade area, an instant gallery and of course the demonstration rotations from a wide range of international turners. This year's line up of 17 demonstrators was much discussed. Covering such a diverse range of turning styles there was plenty to intrigue and much to cause people to think. As with all such events, I heard many people discussing how on earth they would be able to get to see everyone they wished to! As seminars are typically so busy, you have to learn to juggle what you see and do at them, but one thing is for sure, this seminar, as are all such events, are so much

fun. From the chatter I heard from people attending, everyone found something they enjoyed and learned lots just by being there.

I didn't spot any major hiccups in the running and flow organisation, so a big thank you is due to all the organisers and helpers for a job well done.

Highlights

The highlights for me are always the demonstrations, the gallery items on display, meeting people and hearing what they are up to. I never get bored at these kinds of events as there is just so much to do.

The demonstrations – as one would expect – were excellent and insightful. The display of work in the gallery was probably the finest I have seen, mainly due to there being such a rich and diverse mix, which represented the pure turned work through to the enhanced and sculptural. It really showed how people

are experimenting and getting great enjoyment from creating their work.

The AWGB seminar, as with all the seminars I have been fortunate enough to attend, aims to provide something for everyone – no mean feat I can tell you – and they certainly do that.

Pablo Nemzoff collaboration auction

There was a special auction of collaborative pieces, which were initially started off/created by the late Pablo Nemzoff and finished off by turners from around the world, who added their own touches to what Pablo had done. The sales of these pieces raised £5,337. The whole amount was generously donated by Pablo's daughter, Einat Nemzoff, to go towards the AWGB Development Fund.

There was another auction of pieces donated by the demonstrators, members of the AWGB and fellow turners and this raised

over £4,000 and with a few kind donations, the total raised at the seminar came to £10,100, all of which will be put to good use.

Exhibits

This year there were more than 50 exhibits selected from the instant gallery. Approximately 30 additional pieces were added for display at the six-week exhibition in Trowbridge, which started in September. Congratulations to all those who had work selected for the exhibitions. To see the full range, see www.awgb.co.uk/awgb-2015-seminar-top-50.

DEMONSTRATORS

Ambrose O'Halloran
Andrew Hall
Andy Coates
Ashley Harwood
Carlyn Lyndsay
Cynthia Gibson
Jean Claude Charpignon
Marcel van Berkel
Mark Hancock
Mark Sanger
Michael Gibson
Nick Agar
Paul Hannaby
Pete M Jury
Rod Page
Stuart King



'Impossible Dovetail' in maple (*Acer campestre*), sapele (*Entandrophragma cylindricum*) and olive (*Olea europea*), by Ryan Barker



Vase created by Ed Oliver, using horse chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), hot melt glue and gilt cream



Shield by Nick Agar



Cove bowl in black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), by Ashley Harwood



Goblets with captive rings, by Darrell Rushworth



Ornamental piece of work by Jean Claude Charpignon



Miniature chair by Stuart King



There was a display of work and techniques by The Society of Ornamental Turners



'Odd 1 Out', ply base, walnut (*Juglans regia*) spikes and maple (*Acer campestre*), by John Turner

SEMINAR COMMENTS & FAVOURITE PIECES

Richard Shock

Although I've been turning for nearly 15 years, I'd never previously attended the AWGB Biennial Seminar. Mistake! It was a unique opportunity to watch demonstrators from overseas, to see gathered together in one place a large and varied collection of work, and to talk to nearly 200 turners from around the UK and beyond.

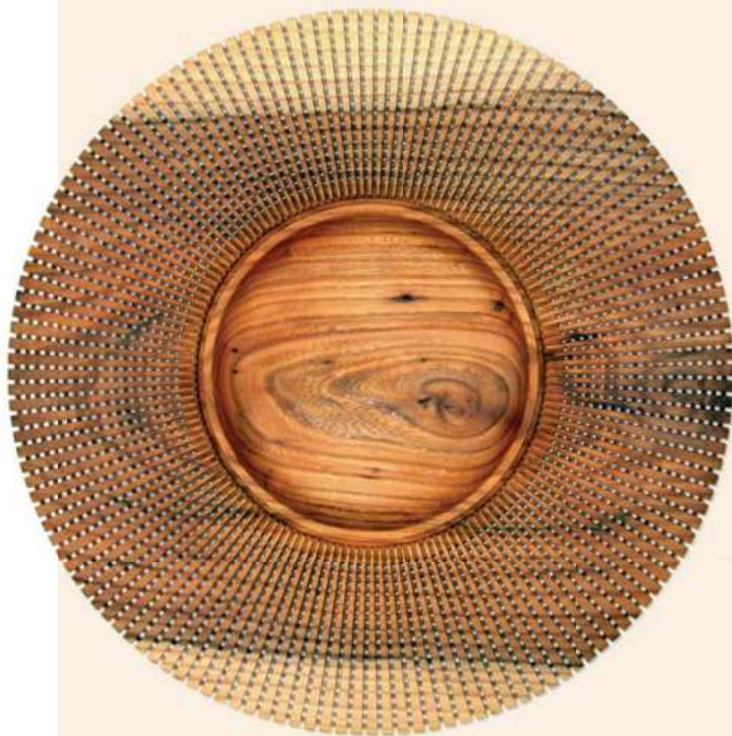
The facilities at Loughborough University were excellent – accommodation rather better than mine at university nearly 50 years ago – and the 'conference suite' seemed ideal – certainly different activities from what they are usually used for.

Delegates could – and I did – attend 10 demonstrations over the three days, focusing on the overseas demonstrators to take advantage of possibly unique

opportunities. However, it wasn't just demonstrations; there were trade stands, the keynote address by Ray Key, an auction of work by the late Pablo Nemzoff and finished in their own styles by many well-known turners, auction of work by many other turners, instant gallery and critique – by Nick Agar, Ashley Harwood and Ray Key – of work chosen from the instant gallery.

Mark Baker asked me to choose one piece from the instant gallery – thanks Mark, that's like 'which one disc would you have on a desert island?!' However, for me it has to be this stunning lattice bowl by Rod Page. I've chosen it for its combination of technical excellence and delicacy of design. Everything about it sings of quality.

“Mark Baker asked me to choose one piece from the instant gallery – thanks Mark, that's like ‘which one disc would you have on a desert island?!’”



Rod Page's wonderful latticework platter

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD SHOCK



Stuart King and one of his turned chess pieces

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDY COATES

Andy Coates

There's no getting away from it, planning and executing an International Woodturning Seminar is stressful. As the opening ceremony closes I am always just about ready to go home. The ship is launched and doesn't need me to steer it. Of course, we can't go home. The executives are there to work, and work they do. I am always just as impressed by the team as I am the presenters.

The highlight of the 2015 seminar has to be the Pablo Nemzoff auction and the deeply moving speech Einat Nemzoff gave to open it. It will be talked about for many years to come. Einat and Gilat, Pablo's daughters, have donated the £5,337 to the AWGB Development fund – a wonderfully generous

gift in Pablo's name.

As ever, the staff get little chance to actually sit and enjoy a demonstration, but this time I decided I would at least sit and watch our honoured guest, the inimitable Stuart King, give his '55 Years in Turning' presentation and I am so glad I did. It was informed, intelligent, witty and inspiring, and a little effortless turning thrown in just to round it off. I'm glad I didn't miss it.

The weekend didn't go without a couple of hiccoughs, but on the whole it was a success. The presenters all did a professional job and the delegate feedback is largely positive so far. Every two years we have the same complaint – it's too expensive – well, I've just had the invoice and no it isn't, but it's worth every penny. ●

Universal Setting Jig

\$29.99 + S/H



The Universal Setting jig from Ron Brown's Best allows you to pick up any HSS lathe gouge you own and reproduce that grind exactly every time. It will also allow you to take a brand-new tool and use the universal setting jig to begin with the nose angle of your choice – such as 35°, 40°, 45° and 50° or anything in between.

Video: <https://youtu.be/sJWHqsa4pZA>
More Info: <http://ronbrownsbest.com>

Quad Setting Jig

\$19.99 + S/H



Having been asked many times about the other side of the grinder, the platform, people have been wanting to know if Ron had something which would enable the same kind of accuracy in sharpening the 'four other tools'. Consequently, Ron came up with a jig to correctly set the proper grinding angles for **roughing gouges, parting tools, skews and bowl scrapers**, naming it the Quad Setting jig.

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The amazing flat compass is designed to be used in a horizontal position resting on the work piece during use. The multi-point drawing tip was designed to be used with pencils and ballpoint pens to the largest sharpie. Bowl Turner's will find the amazing flat compass particularly useful as they **lay out bowl blanks**. Traditional pencils do not write very well, if at all, on wet rough surfaces. Sharpies excel in this application.

Video: https://youtu.be/IA00kExw4_Q
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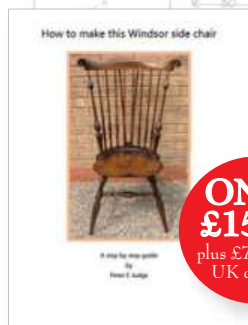
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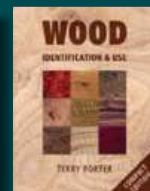
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Tips for turning a milking stool

Philip Greenwood takes you through the stages for turning a three-legged milking stool in beech

PHILIP GREENWOOD



Philip has been turning wood since 1980 and started turning professionally in 1986. He was accepted onto the Register of Professional Turners (RPT) in 2006. He is also a member of the AWGB.

He can be seen working in his workshop in North Yorkshire and has demonstrated at the woodworking show at Harrogate since 2008. He runs courses at his workshop.

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This project shows how to make a simple three-legged stool in beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). This stool can have a variety of uses not just for sitting on, but as a stand to place a plant, for example. This project is a combination of spindle and faceplate turning, which a lot of projects are made up from. Some people are put off this type of project due to the leg holes being drilled at an angle. A simple jig made to fit in your toolrest assembly will make drilling simple on the lathe, with no need for a pillar drill or trying to angle a drill correctly for every hole. Yes, you can use a guide to help with this.

Your stool could be made with legs if you choose, but traditionally, they were made with three, so the stool would sit on an uneven floor. I made my stool so the legs wouldn't go through the top but, if you prefer yours to do this, then a wedge can be used

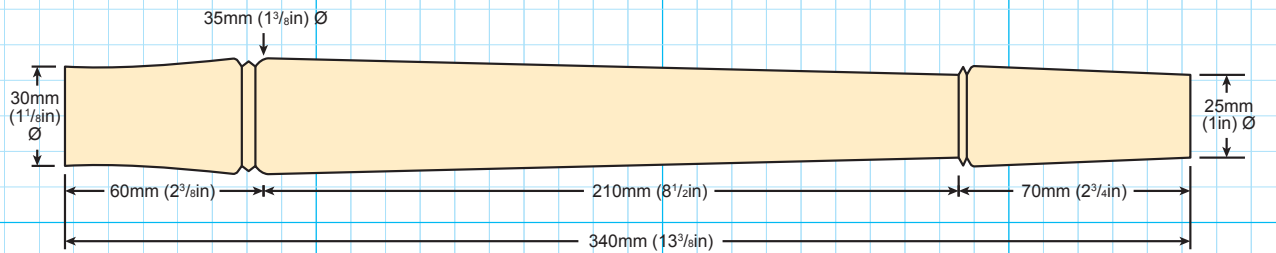
to lock the legs in place. You could go on to carve this and or pyrograph the top and legs, even adding colour if you so choose. The possibilities are endless. As with most projects you make, it can be the finished item or you can go on to make it more individual. Alternatively, contrasting timber can be used

for the top. The top is a piece of cross grain beech while the legs are made from parallel beech. The legs need to be a good fit in the holes and good quality wood glue is used to glue the legs in place. I have used an oil finish to give the stool good protection but you could apply wax to the top of this as well.



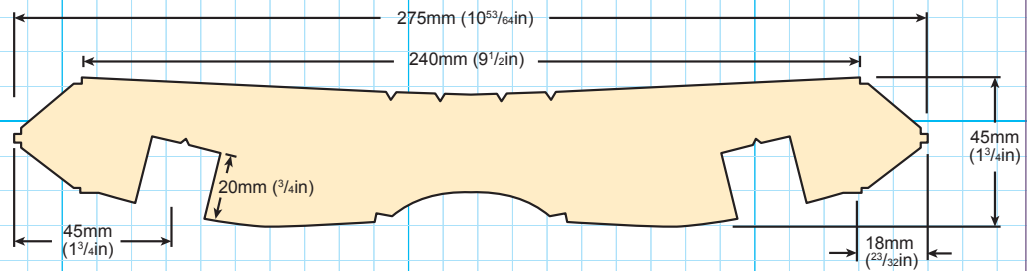
PHOTOGRAPHS BY WENDY GREENWOOD

PLANS AND EQUIPMENT



EQUIPMENT USED

10mm bowl gouge
25mm French-curve scraper
3mm parting tool
20mm skew chisel
10mm spindle gouge with a fingernail profile
Centre finder
Bradawl
54mm sawtooth bit
Pillar drill
Lathe indexing facility
120, 180, 240, 320 and 400 grit abrasives
Oil finish
Wood glue
PPE: facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction



DRILLING JIG LATHE

This jig offers a way to drill holes on a lathe. Measure the height of the tool stem that fits in the toolrest assembly to just below the toolpost locking mechanism – for mine it is 40mm – then measure the centre height from the top of the toolrest assembly to the centre of the four-prong centre – this is 75mm – then add 30mm or more on to the total. I had a scrap piece measuring 160mm long × 45mm. Turn this between centres to a round, then turn the end 40mm down to the toolpost diameter, which for me is 25mm. The drill bit shank for the drill I used is 12mm diameter, so I need to drill a 12mm hole in this stem at a centre height of 75mm from where it fits the toolrest assembly to the centre height



PILLAR DRILL JIG



If you have a pillar drill, then you can make a simple jig. This is a false table that fits on the pillar drill table, which can be angled for the stool legs. Hinge two pieces of MDF or plywood together along one edge. On the top piece of the jig, you need a strip of timber to form a 'V' to hold the stool top in place while drilling, as well as an adjustable method of angling the top to suit the legs splay, in this instance. This is a jig that can be used for many purposes

FINISHES – OIL VS. WAX

Sanding sealant and wax are a very quick finish to apply to turned items. For items that will not come into contact with liquids, this is also a very good finish to use, but can leave marks if any liquids remain on the surface. Apply sanding sealant first to stop the wax from soaking in too much – one or two coats will normally be OK. An oil finish takes longer because of the drying time – this can be up to 24 hours between coats. Two or more coats are needed depending on the density of the timber, so you are looking at a few days to finish an item. Most oil finishes are water resistant – resistant being the word over waterproof. A lacquer could be used to make the timber surface waterproof. Wax can be applied on top of an oil finish, but not oil on wax



**1****2****3****4****5****6****7****8**

1 Before you start, look for the piece of wood that will form the underside of the stool. I use a large plastic disc to find the centre of large items; this will work well on small items as well. Use a bradawl to mark the centre

2 Use a sawtooth bit of a size to suit your chuck jaws – in my case 54mm – held in a drill stand to cut a recess around 5mm deep, or use a faceplate. With the hole now cut, mount this on the chuck ready to turn. You can then place the toolrest in position

3 Set your lathe at the appropriate speed, bearing in mind how true the disc has been cut on the bandsaw. True up the outer edge using the bowl gouge, with the flutes facing the direction of cut and the bevel in contact, which will allow you to achieve a controlled cut

4 This is what will become the top of the stool. Cut a recess in the face towards the centre but leave enough timber – in my case 55mm – to suit your jaws in the centre to form a spigot. This will be used to hold onto when we turn the underside of the stool top. Use the long point of the skew to cut the dovetail for the chuck jaws

5 Hold on the spigot you have created on the top side. Tighten the chuck fully and take a light cut on the outer rim to true this up

6 Start to shape the base while leaving the recess in the middle. You are looking for a curve running from the centre towards the edge, which serves two purposes: to maintain the thickness for drilling the leg holes while also giving the edge a lighter appearance

7 At the edge turn a cove with the bowl gouge, then use the parting tool to place two rebates on the cove, which will help to add detail and highlight the cove on the edge. This cove is around one-third of the edge width

8 You can now begin to clean up the recess with the bowl gouge as the drill bit is likely to leave a rough surface. This can be slightly dishd towards the centre. Use the skew chisel flat on the toolrest to cut the dovetail to match the chuck jaws

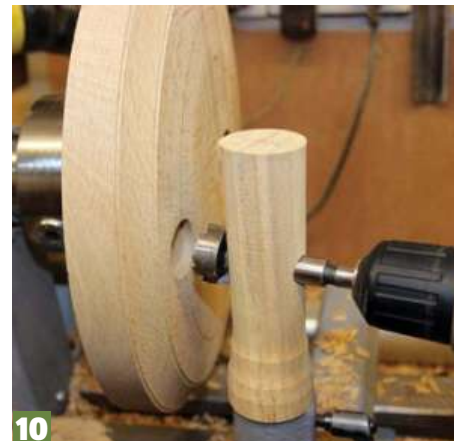
HANDY HINTS

- 1.** For the legs, use straight grain timber as this will guarantee maximum strength
- 2.** Always wear protective glasses or a face shield and a dust mask when turning; this will allow you to avoid potential health problems
- 3.** Test the joints before gluing to make sure they fit fully in the holes – you don't want to find out it won't go all the way in partway through the project

9 Next, using a pencil, mark the diameter that the legs will sit on. I have an indexing facility on my lathe so I use position 1, 9 and 17 to divide the circle at the three points. Try to arrange the holes so one sits centrally on the side grain as in the photo



10 Use the jig shown in the first sidebar by inserting the drill into the jig first. Line up with one of the pencil marks and then angle the jig and bit so you have the correct splay angle for the legs. Now lock the toolrest assembly and the jig, then fasten the drill bit to the drill chuck. Next, drill a hole for the spigot of the leg – mine was around 15mm deep. Repeat for the other two holes



11 Sand all the turned parts with abrasive starting with 120 and going up to 180, 240, 320 and 400 grit. After you've used the first grit, check to make sure you have removed all the tool marks



12 Hold on the recess in the base, turn the spigot away, then using the bowl gouge, turn the top flat or with a slight concave. Use a push cut with bevel contact to achieve a good surface finish



13 Use a round-nose scraper to remove any marks or ridges left by the bowl gouge. Sometimes a flat-edge scraper works well on a flat surface but only if you have a small radius on the corners, which will stop the corners digging in and leaving a mark when moving across the surface. Always hold a scraper in a trailing mode, i.e. with the handle held slightly higher than the tip of the tool



14 Using the bowl gouge and parting tool, as shown in step 7, repeat the cove detail on the top corner of the stool so it matches the detail on the underside



15 Use the long point of the skew chisel to cut two circles on the top. Hold the skew chisel horizontally and just push lightly to cut the circles, then sand the entire top



16 You can then place one of the legs between centres using a four-prong centre in the headstock and a revolving centre in the tailstock. Use a spindle roughing gouge to reduce the square to a round. Turn to the same diameter on each leg – all three legs will need turning in the same way



HANDY HINTS

4. After turning, check that all the legs match in design, then make any adjustments as needed
5. If the item may come into contact with liquids, then oil is a better finish to use than wax



17



18



19



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21



22



23

17 Use a template to mark out the leg design on the leg using a pencil; this will show the main points of the design and will make turning the legs a lot easier, eliminating the need to measure all the time. Use callipers set to each diameter as well

18 Part down to the diameter of the hole you drilled in the stool top. Part down at this end first and try the fit in the hole before turning the full length. This means that if you turn it down too small, it is only the very end of the leg that will be slack

19 Here I am using the long point of the skew chisel to cut a 'V' at the bottom part of the leg. Take several small cuts and only use the point. If you should catch the full edge of the skew on the edge of the 'V' it will dig in, so it is therefore important to keep the skew chisel vertical while you're doing this

20 Use the spindle gouge to cut down from the 'V' at the top of the leg down to the parallel spigot – this way, the leg will fit into the top without a ridge. For a smooth cut, keep the bevel in contact with the timber surface; this will reduce the amount of sanding required later

21 The middle section is a long sweep, which is ideal for a skew chisel for a very fine surface. Use with the long point upmost and look for the shavings coming off the tool edge around one-third to halfway up from the lower point – any higher will result in a dig in. Now sand through all the grits of abrasives, stopping after the first to check that all tool marks have been removed

22 The next step is to oil all the parts of the stool – the only part that doesn't need oiling is the spigot at the top of the leg and the three holes in the top where it will be glued. If you do oil these parts, then the glue joint will not be as strong. Apply three coats of oil and denib between coats. Once dry, glue up and make sure the legs go fully in the holes you have drilled

23 The completed three-legged milking stool should look something like this ●

HANDY HINTS

- 6.** You can cut out a template to shape if you wish to check the shape and detail, or just mark the main points on a piece of card or MDF
- 7.** A contrasting timber could be used on the top of the stool
- 8.** Have lots of spring callipers set to each diameter; this will save you having to adjust them all the time
- 9.** Make sure all the leg holes are at the same angle

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As we mentioned in the last issue, Kallenshaan Woods have recently launched a brand-new range of inlay kits. Some of the other kits in the range include the 'Cutthroat Trout', which is made from 14 pieces of holly (*Ilex spp.*), green dyed black ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) burl, tulipwood (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), curly maple (*Acer saccharum*), red dyed spalted maple (*Acer campestre*) and black dyed basswood (*Tilia americana*). Another new kit is the 'Dolphin', which is made up of seven pieces of teal dyed basswood, holly and grey dyed basswood, which is available for the Sierra-style pen kit. Thirdly, the 'Western Cross' is made using 16 pieces of mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), teal dyed basswood, natural basswood and teal dyed boxelder burl. Also included is a 50mm length of 20G sterling silver wire, which is used to make the 21 pins that trace the centre of the cross.



FROM £12.79

Contact: Kallenshaan Woods
Tel: (001) 702 523 9236
Web: www.kallenshaanwoods.com

AXMINSTER TRADE SERIES DUST EXTRACTOR

This wall-mounted dust extractor is a rather neat concept and perfectly suited to small workshops, woodturners or for connecting to a stand-alone machine.

Well made and efficient, its 1hp motor generates 1,000m³/hr of airflow and is fitted with a 1 micron rated cartridge filter making it capable of handling chippings, coarse and medium fine dusts. It is ideal for situations where floor space is limited such as in many woodturning workshops.

The collection bag is clipped to the bottom of the filter. Larger bags can be fitted, but the user will need to support it underneath on the floor as the weight of a full bag may pull it off the filter. The filter has a crank handle operating a paddle to keep the interior clean, which should be used periodically to maintain filter efficiency.

This quiet and efficient extractor could well be a handy solution for small workshops; it is important to make sure the wall is capable of supporting the extractor's weight. Please note that this price is valid until 31 December, 2015.



FROM £319.96

Contact: Axminster Tools & Machinery
Tel: 03332 406 406
Web: www.axminster.com

HOLLOW-PRO ROCKET TOOLS

Hollow-Pro Rocket tools are claimed to be fast and efficient hollowing tools for making hollow vessels up to approximately 180mm tall and 180mm in diameter. Rocket tools feature a 10mm diameter, 200mm long round shaft to allow hollowing through very small openings. The round shaft design also allows you to create a clean shear cut by rotating the tool slightly. Rocket tools use a Hunter No.1 size circular carbide cutter and will fit into any large handle with a 10mm or 12mm opening. Made in USA and includes one straight tool, one bent tool, two #1 Hunter Carbide Cutters, and Torx wrench.



FROM £97.59

Contact: Craft Supplies USA
Tel: 1 800 551 8876
Web: www.woodturnerscatalog.com

TREND T31 WET AND DRY DUST EXTRACTOR

This new powerful semi-professional wet and dry Class L auto-start vacuum extractor with power take off is suitable for hobbyist, DIY and light trade use. Dust class category L is rated to EN60335-2-69, for dust with workplace limit values great than 1 mg/m³. It features a powerful but quiet 1,400W silenced motor – maximum 1,600W – and power tool take off with auto-start feature of up to 2,200W and a five second run-on delay. There is a large 35 litre capacity impact resistant plastic container with castors as well as an extra long 7m power cable. An extra long 5m hose also benefits from a power tool adapter and there is also a HEPA cartridge filter with 0.3 micron filter efficiency and nylon pre-filter. Includes floor cleaning kit, power tool adaptor, crevice tool, upholstery tool and a no foam filter. There is also a container outlet plug for ease of emptying liquids. The T31 is ideal for workshop, garage and light trade applications.

£214.80

Contact: Trend Machinery & Cutting Tools Ltd

Tel: 01923 249 911

Web: www.trend-uk.com



UNIVERSAL SETTING JIG AND QUAD SETTING JIG



£19.17

Universal Setting jig



£13

Quad Setting jig

Universal Setting jig

The Universal Setting jig from Ron Brown's Best allows you to pick up any HSS lathe gouge you own and reproduce that grind exactly every time. It is claimed this jig does it all! Users say it can reproduce any grind you currently have and it will also allow you to take a brand-new tool and use the universal setting jig to begin with the nose angle of your choice – such as 35°, 40°, 45° and 50° or anything in between.

Quad Setting jig

Having been asked many times about the other side of the grinder, the platform, people have been wanting to know if Ron had something which would enable the same kind of accuracy in sharpening the 'four other tools'. Consequently, Ron came up with a jig to correctly set the proper grinding angles for roughing gouges, parting tools, skews and bowl scrapers, naming it the Quad Setting jig.

Contact: Ron Brown's Best

Tel: (001) 770 962 3821

Web: www.ronbrownsbest.com

ARTISAN CLASSIC SAFETY RAZOR KIT

Superbly balanced with just the right amount of heft, the Artisan classic safety razor kit from Craft Supplies USA features chrome plated solid brass components throughout as well as a full-size handle. It accepts all standard double-edge shaving blades and is compatible with their Artisan razor stand. The exclusive threaded rod design allows you to easily disassemble the handle as needed for cleaning or refinishing. Turning is done using a standard pen mandrel with bushings – sold separately. Instructions are included. Minimum blank size is 16 x 16 x 90mm. The finished size of the razor is 12 x 111mm long. It comes with solid brass components and a long wearing chrome plating with superb balance and heft in use.



£5.74

Contact: Craft Supplies USA

Tel: (001) 800 551 8876

Web: www.woodturnerscatalog.com

THE PALE 'GOLD' FLAKE

The Pale 'Gold' Flake – copper and aluminium – offers a lot of possibilities for embellishing your woodturning. Stiles & Bates have used them on knotty or burry pieces with great effect and plan to use them with the spiraling tool next. The Pale Gold flakes are known to be very fine and handle almost like a liquid, so disposable gloves are a good idea when using the flakes.

Stiles & Bates have had good results using the one hour epoxy resin, but one of their experienced users prefers to sprinkle the powder on, then carefully drip thin cyanoacrylate glue until it is soaked. For use with resin, mix the resin and hardener together then add the powder to form a mixture like putty. Mix very thoroughly.

Turn your piece close to finished size and shape, then spread the 'putty' into the area to be filled. When it has set, turn back to the wood to reveal the embedded bronze. Brass powder darkens with age so work carried out at different times will vary in shade.



FROM £3



Contact: Stile & Bates

Tel: 01304 366 360

Web: www.stilesandbates.co.uk

AWGB INSTRUCTOR TRAINING – 'LET'S TEACH TURNING' COURSE

The AWGB has designed and written the 'Let's Teach Turning' e-learning course to give turners who give tuition some assistance in teaching the basics of woodturning at training workshops, club events such as hands-on evenings or taster sessions at Scout jamborees.

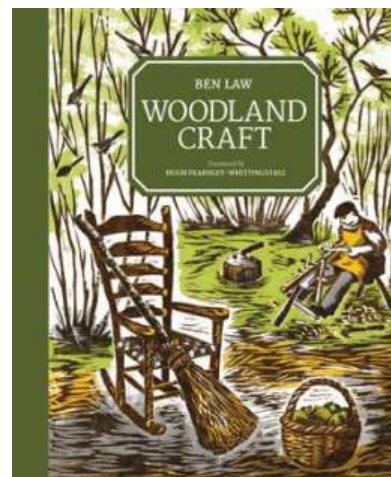
The course takes around two-and-a-half hours to complete and we expect people to do it in stages over a few days or even longer. The e-learning CD will be a useful reference to revisit time and time again.

On completion of the self-paced course, AWGB members have the opportunity to attend an assessment day where their teaching abilities will be assessed and if successful they will be awarded the AWGB Approved Tutor badge. Completion of the course is a prerequisite to attending the assessment day.

Assessment days will be arranged by

demand with dates announced on the AWGB website and future editions of Revolutions. The assessment will take approximately one hour and candidates will be required to deliver a lesson, followed by feedback with a question and answer session.

The course is designed for use on a Windows PC and you can download the e-learning course on the AWGB website for free or purchase a copy of the CD for £16 including postage.



BOOK REVIEW & OFFER: WOODLAND CRAFT BY BEN LAW

Ben Law is approaching 25 years of living in Prickly Nut Wood, so we can certainly say he knows his woodland crafts well! His new book, *Woodland Craft*, focuses on the crafts and products that are manufactured from, and in, the woods.

The book has seven chapters – each of which are divided further down – on the following topics: the woodland resource, directory of tree species, crafts for farm and garden, wood fuel, crafts for building, domestic crafts, and finally, tools and devices for woodland crafts.

Within the 'directory of tree species', Ben looks at a small number of different woods, including; alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), birch (*Betula pendula*), cherry (*Prunus spp.*), elm (*Ulmus procera*), lime (*Tilia vulgaris*), oak (*Quercus robur*) and more, which could be useful should the reader be interested in learning about a certain type of tree/timber.

Ben addresses all kinds of subjects, such as woodland craft materials, the history of the woodland resource and woodland management. He also shows you how to make projects, such as a wattle hurdle, woven panel, besom broom, split-handle hay rake, chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) paling fencing, post-and-rail fencing, diamond trellis and a gate hurdle and many more.

The information is packed into clearly divided chapters, with plenty of lovely colourful photographs throughout. The pages are fun in that they don't follow a particular pattern, some text-based and others with bright photo galleries.

Usual price: £25 (plus P&P)

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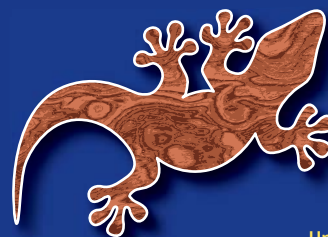
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Ron Gerton – 'Shall We Dance'

Ron Gerton shares this wonderful piece, made in boxelder and bronze, which wonderfully marries the shape of sagebrush plants and the Art Nouveau era

I moved to Hawaii from Colorado for my first job after college and it was there that I first saw bonsai plants – I was totally impressed. I got some books on these freaks of nature and soon became aware of the relationship to an art form known as 'Art Nouveau', or 'noodle art' as some refer to it. I loved the furniture, poster illustrations, paintings and the wonderful jewellery. I was taken by the flowing branches and the use of leaves and insects, all so wonderfully arranged.

After six years, I moved to the desert part of Washington State and worked out how to cast gold, silver and make jewellery – Art Nouveau style – as a hobby but soon wanted to do larger metal pieces. I discovered some dead contorted sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) plants while hiking around the desert and they reminded me of the bonsai plants. I scaled up my metal casting and made a bronze casting foundry. Now there was no limit to the size of metal art that I could create. I began casting these fantastic sagebrush bonsai pieces into bronze and combining several of them to make sculptures.

A few years later, a friend showed me some hollow vessels he had made on a lathe and I was, again, very impressed. I soon acquired a lathe and began making hollow vessels. I love the beauty that mother nature has created in the sagebrush shapes and the beauty created in wood, so I look for the most awesome wood for making my hollow vessels.

I have made hollow vessels as large as 1.2m in diameter and as small as 50mm. It wasn't long before I started combining my bronze bonsais with my hollow vessels to create unique sculptures. Putting my two favourite materials together, wood and metal, is always exciting, since they are rarely combined by other artists. When I'm looking for the right vessel to go with a wonderful bronze piece, or the right bronze piece to go with a special vessel,

I feel like a matchmaker for two shy and lonely beings. It takes two to 'tango', I have been told, so I feel like I'm creating a 'dancing with the stars' type of challenge. But when the right ones finally meet, it is magic.

As I looked at the pairing for this piece, it looked like they were really ready to dance, thus the title 'Shall We Dance'. ●

Email: rgerton@msn.com

Web: www.rongerton.com



'Shall We Dance', boxelder (*Acer negundo*) burl and bronze, 180 × 100 × 125mm

PHOTOGRAPH BY RON GERTON

Ben Beddows, Axminster Skill Centre Technician and Tutor, takes time out to put the new Axminster Trade Series Precision Pro lathe through its paces.

As a highly skilled pen turner Ben found the powerful variable speed motor, combined with the supplied Axminster Evolution Series Compression Pen Mandrel, gave him perfect vibration free control over the work.



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